



*Our Lady of Victory Parish
Confirmation Preparation Program
Candidate and Family Handbook
2020 - 2021*

Welcome!

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – his actions, his gifts, and his biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands. (Catechism, 1309)

Thank you for **choosing** to participate in Our Lady of Victory Parish's Confirmation Preparation Program! Your willingness to commit yourself to completing the program and receiving the sacrament of Confirmation conveys to the entire faith community how much you value both your faith and your community. Your faith formation throughout the course of the two-year Confirmation preparation program will both assist you in identifying the gifts and talents you possess and challenge you to put these gifts and talents to use in our community. You will be invited to take responsibility for your own faith formation, as well as to assist others in that same endeavor.

The model of formation used at Our Lady of Victory is based on John Roberto's *Generations of Faith* parish-based whole-community catechesis program. Here at Our Lady of Victory Parish, we call our intergenerational approach to faith formation "Generations in Faith Together," or, more simply, "GIFT With GIFT *all* of your family – and your friends and their families -- are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Program with you. This model of faith formation is very different from what many of your parents probably experienced in their own Confirmation preparation programs. Why? Because the Church's understanding of the theology of Confirmation has evolved over the years – and it will continue to do so. Just over forty years ago, the Church reinstated the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) for adults wishing to become Catholic. The RCIA process is formed around the liturgical life of the Church; it seeks to give participants not only a greater understanding of the teachings of the faith, but also the tools they will need in order to be able to continue to grow in the faith after having received the three sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation). This only makes sense, as we are reminded that initiation into the Body of Christ is only the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith.

Unlike the RCIA, in cases of infant Baptism, the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation are separated by several years. In this case, the primary faith teachers for a child are his/her parents. Any parish faith formation program is meant only to supplement what is being taught at home as well as what is being taught during Sunday Liturgy. The Confirmation preparation program here at Our Lady Victory is no exception; it assumes that: 1) you are regularly participating in Sunday Liturgy, and 2) you are exploring and learning about your faith with your family. The Confirmation program, while containing some catechetical formation, will primarily focus on creative faith-building and reflective faith-sharing exercises within small Christian communities. Like the RCIA model, Our Lady of Victory's Confirmation Preparation Program aims to provide participants with both a more profound understanding of their faith as well as the tools they will need in order to be able to continue to grow in faith after having received the sacrament of Confirmation.

This program therefore represents a big shift in thinking for all of us. The Confirmation preparation process changed here at Our Lady of Victory in 2002 in a dramatic fashion, and this

year's changes demonstrate that its implementation continues to evolve. This handbook contains some information concerning the theology of Confirmation, an overview of the program, expectations and requirements of the program, as well as other sources of information intended to be both helpful and useful for you as a candidate for Confirmation. In addition, supplementary communications and materials will be distributed to you throughout the course of the program. If at any time you have any questions, concerns, or feedback, and/or if you would like additional information or resources, please do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator.

Thank you once again for your commitment and dedication to your own faith formation and to our entire parish community. May God continue to bless us all as we work, play, and pray together in the year ahead.

Summary of the Confirmation Preparation Process at Our Lady of Victory

The Confirmation preparation program here at Our Lady of Victory is a two-year formation process based on the principles concerning parish ministry to youth set forth in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' 1997 document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. *The candidate who willingly and actively participates in this process and is confirmed will have an understanding of him-/herself as an individual loved and called by God to discipleship as a valued member of both our parish community and the universal Church.*

No candidate should be coerced into the formation process, as this not only defeats the purposes of the program but also creates an atmosphere that could negatively affect others. It is expected that the young person who wishes to receive the sacrament of Confirmation accepts the above-stated understanding of what it means to be confirmed and will participate fully in the process as well as take seriously what it means to be a member of the Church. Candidates, *together with their families*, are asked to read over and discuss the expectations and requirements of Our Lady of Victory's Confirmation preparation program as stated in this handbook before signing and submitting to the program coordinator the participation agreement on the last page of this document. *Failure to meet any of the expectations and/or complete any of the requirements herein stated is equivalent to withdrawal from the program for the year (Candidates may re-enroll the following year.).*

It is expected that all candidates are attending Mass each week. If they are away from the parish, it is expected that they will seek out another Catholic church in which to attend Mass. The Eucharist is central to the Catholic life. It is the central means by which we nourish our faith and worship God. Further, it is through hearing the Scriptures read and discussed that we learn more about our faith and about God. The Confirmation program is intended to complement the faith formation that takes place both within the candidates' families and at the Mass.

Attendance and Participation

Due to COVID-19 most of our program will be remote. OLVGIFT.com has a full explanation of the program. Candidates and/or their families experiencing any anxiety or concern related to this expectation should contact the program coordinator.

Attendance, however, is just the beginning! Candidates need to make the most of our time together by engaging and participating fully in the GIFT sessions, Confirmation II Classes, Confirmation retreats and service projects. We are all unique individuals, and we each possess our own gifts and talents. We need to work together to establish a community in which everyone feels comfortable, encouraged, and supported enough to share his/her gifts, talents, and faith so that we all may learn from each other and grow together.

Community Service

The Church teaches us that it is the responsibility of the baptized to live the Gospel in the world. Christians actively preach and spread the Gospel when they participate in both civic and parish-based activities in a manner consistent with Jesus' example and teachings. As we believe that the sacrament of Confirmation empowers a person to live the faith in a very public way, each candidate is asked to engage in community service work. *Candidates are required to complete community service for each year of participation in the Confirmation program here at Our Lady of Victory.*

In 2020/2021 Students will be required to do ten hours community service. Volunteer activities could include raking your neighbor's leaves, shoving snow, watching someone's children to give them a break, coaching a team, visiting the elderly etc. Service activities should be listed on attached form and submitted by May 1 to director.

Retreats

Candidates are asked to participate in retreat experiences during both years of the Confirmation formation process. Confirmation I candidates will come together for a retreat on a Sunday in April. Confirmation II candidates will participate in a full day retreat on a Saturday in March. *These retreat experiences are mandatory!* Due to the holistic nature of the retreats, candidates will not be allowed to arrive late and/or leave early. If a candidate cannot attend the scheduled retreats within the OLV Confirmation program, then he/she is responsible for finding and attending a comparable retreat experience offered by a neighboring parish, Catholic school, or Catholic youth group (If you need to go this route, please know that almost all parish-based Confirmation retreats take place between September and March, so don't wait until March to try to find a retreat!). While participation in retreat experiences offered by Catholic schools, ECHO, etc., does fulfill this program requirement, candidates are urged to make every attempt to attend OLV's Confirmation retreats; the Confirmation retreats are an integral part of our Confirmation preparation program and have traditionally been very moving and fondly-remembered faith experiences for candidates. *Any retreat experience outside of those offered by this program must be approved by the program coordinator prior to the candidate's participation in the experience.*

Confirmation Projects

Confirmation I:

Candidates in both years of the formation process must create and submit a Confirmation project. Confirmation I candidates are asked to write a one to two page letter to our pastor. Candidates are encouraged to write their letters from the heart, but they may wish to use the following questions to get started. *This letter is due April 1.*

- What does being confirmed mean to you?
- What does being a member of this parish community mean to you?
- What does your faith mean to you? What does it mean to you to be Catholic?
- What role do God and your faith in God play in your everyday life?
- Why do you want to be confirmed?
- How will you participate in our parish community after you receive Confirmation?

Confirmation II:

Candidates in both years of the formation process must create and submit a Confirmation project. Confirmation II candidates are asked to complete a project that shows a knowledge and understanding of the saint whose name they are choosing as their own Confirmation name (Please see the following section, entitled "Choosing a Confirmation Name," for additional information.).

Choosing a Confirmation Name

In the Catholic Church, we have a tradition of taking the name of a saint for our own Confirmation name. The saint whose name we choose serves as an inspiration to us in living out our Christian faith. *Candidates in Confirmation II will be asked to choose a saint's name to take as their own and to complete a creative project on that saint.* Candidates may also choose their own baptismal name, reinforcing the connection between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. *These projects are due at or before the March 1.*

A good place to start researching saints is the Catholic Online website, www.catholic.org/saints/. There you will find an alphabetical index of saints, an index of patron saints, and a calendar with saints' feast days, among other useful tools. The program coordinator also has several resources that may aid candidates in their research; candidates are encouraged to inquire about these resources. In starting to research saints and complete their projects, candidates may want to consider the following questions:

- How and why did your parents choose your baptismal name?
- What does your baptismal name mean?
- Are there any biblical references to your baptismal name?
- What activities, places, people, etc. interest you? Is there a patron saint associated with any of these activities, places, people, etc.?
- Which saints have their feast day on your birthday?
- Which saints inspire you? Why?
- When and where did the saint you are interested in live? When was he/she canonized? By which pope?
- How did this saint die? Was he/she persecuted and/or martyred for his/her beliefs?
- What was this saint's occupation?
- What did this saint's mission look like?
- What virtues did this saint practice in his/her life? Did this saint always practice these virtues? Did this saint experience a conversion?
- How would you describe this saint's personality?
- What miracles did this saint perform?
- Are there any symbols associated with this saint? What are their meanings?
- In what ways is this saint a model for Christians today?
- How would this saint act/react if he/she were living in today's world?
- If this saint were to complete a Confirmation project on his/her own life, what kind of project would he/she create?

Projects do not have to be written reports. Indeed, candidates are encouraged to be creative and original. Projects submitted by candidates in the past include posters, models, dioramas, screenplays, mobiles, first-person narratives written from the point of view of the saint, sculptures, and woodcarvings – the possibilities are limited only by our imagination! Projects will be handed in at the March/April GIFT session.

Candidates may work together with family, friends, and/or fellow candidates to complete their project requirement. However, as with school projects, plagiarism within this project component of the program is not acceptable. *All sources used in completing the projects (including the Catholic Online website) must be properly cited and credited.* Questions about plagiarism and the proper citation of sources should be directed to either the program coordinator or the candidate's high school English teacher. *The program coordinator reserves the right to return projects to candidates for further work if the submitted work does not reflect the individual attention, care, effort, and/or reverence required for participation in this program.*

Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor

Candidates are free to choose their own Confirmation sponsors. Sponsors should:

- *be a confirmed Catholic in good standing and at least 16 years of age.*
- *be a registered member of a Catholic parish.*
- *know the candidate well and be willing to serve as a Christian guide and role model for the candidate.*
- *together with the candidate's parents, be willing to support the young person being confirmed in his/her commitment to living a Christian life.*
- *be confident enough in their own faith commitment to be able to support a young person in his/her faith commitment.*

Candidates are encouraged to choose one of their baptismal godparents to be their Confirmation sponsor, emphasizing the important relationship between the two sacraments. Because it is the sponsor's role to support both the candidate *and his/her parents*, parents cannot be their child's sponsor.

Confirmation II candidates need to select a sponsor no later than the March/April GIFT session. Each candidate-sponsor pair will need to complete and submit a sponsorship form (included on the last page of this packet). Once a candidate has chosen his/her sponsor, candidates are urged to invite their sponsors to accompany them to the GIFT sessions. Sponsors are also invited and encouraged to join the candidates for the Confirmation rehearsal session. If a candidate's sponsor is unable to be present at the Confirmation Mass (due to illness, distance to travel, etc.), a proxy may stand in for him/her. Again, please do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator with any questions or concerns about choosing a Confirmation sponsor.

Announcements

Time will be set aside at each session for the program coordinator to make important announcements relevant to the program. It is vital that candidates pay attention to these announcements. As appropriate, announcements may be placed in the parish bulletin and posted on the parish website, www.OLVGIFT.com. *Candidates, their families, and team leaders are all strongly encouraged to give the program coordinator their email addresses so that announcements and other important communications can be sent back and forth quickly and easily.*

Weather-related cancellations: In the event inclement weather strikes on the day of a scheduled session, retreat, or other Confirmation program event and requires the session/event to be cancelled, a message will be both sent out via email and left on the Office of Teen Faith Formation's voicemail greeting (at 508-771-9378 ext. 119). On school days, the understanding is that if the Barnstable public schools are closed or dismissed early due to weather conditions, then all parish-based activities are also cancelled for that day.

2020 - 2021 Schedules

Confirmation I: Important Dates and Deadlines

Sunday, March 13, 2021 (2:00 PM - 6:30 PM): *Retreat day* TBD Live or Remote

April 1 : *Letter to Pastor due.*

May 1 - *Volunteer Hours submitted*

Confirmation II: Important Dates and Deadlines

Confirmation II Classes: 4 - 6:30 TBD Live or Remote

January 24

March 14

Saturday, March 6: (9:00 AM – 5:30 PM) *Retreat day* TBD Live or Remote

March 1: *Sponsor/Information form due*

March 1 session: *Saint project due.*

May: Rehearsal and Confirmation (Sponsors or a stand-in should plan on attending the rehearsal.)

- Confirmation dates are typically set by the diocese in December. Rehearsal dates are contingent on the Confirmation dates. Details will be forthcoming to all families as soon as possible.

GIFT SESSIONS

If possible we will have in person GIFT sessions beginning in January.

Miscellaneous Information

Registration

- *\$25 registration fee per participant for each year of formation in the parish GIFT program (with a family maximum of \$100)*
Please note that the registration fee is waived for all who volunteer their time and talents to serve as catechists/facilitators in the parish's GIFT program. Faith formation in general – and the sacraments in particular – will never be withheld in times of financial need. If there is a hardship in meeting any of these fees, please do not hesitate to contact the program coordinator.
- *\$15 additional registration fee per candidate in Confirmation I*
This fee helps to cover the cost of the retreat as well as supplementary Confirmation program materials.
- *\$30 additional registration fee per candidate in Confirmation II*
This fee helps to cover the cost of the two retreat, the Confirmation robe rental, as well as supplementary Confirmation program materials.
- *All candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation must have previously received the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and Eucharist. By the time of his/her registration for participation in the Confirmation Preparation Program, a copy of each candidate's baptismal certificate must be on file in our parish office.*

Program Coordinator Contact Information

Program coordinator: Bill Bussiere

Address: Our Lady of Victory Parish
Office of Teen Faith Formation
230 South Main Street
Centerville, MA 02632

Phone: 508-771-9378 ext. 119

Fax: 508-771-1614

Email: Billb@olvparish.

*Our Lady of Victory Parish
Confirmation Preparation Program*

Candidate Participation Agreement

I, _____, willingly present myself as a candidate to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of Victory Parish. I understand that my active participation in the parish's two-year Confirmation faith formation program is an essential part of my preparation for this sacrament.

I have carefully read the Confirmation Candidate and Family Handbook, distributed prior to the first session of the year, and I have discussed the requirements and expectations of the program with my team leaders and my parents/guardians. In particular, I understand that:

- Because my participation in all sessions each year is integral both to my own faith formation as well as to the formation of the community, I am expected to attend each GIFT session. .
- Because my willingness to serve as a witness to Jesus' message within my community is really what Confirmation is all about, I am expected to participate (as set forth in the Handbook) in community service work during each of the two years of the formation process.
- Because formation and reflection are key components of the Confirmation preparation program, I am expected to participate in retreat experiences each year.
- Because knowledge and understanding are priceless gifts, I am expected to create and submit a Confirmation project each year (again, according to the guidelines stated the Handbook).

I also understand that if I do not meet any of the above expectations over the course of a year, I will be considered withdrawn from the program for the year. I may re-enroll either the following year or at such a time when I am ready and able to participate fully in faith- and community-building.

I agree to participate to the best of my abilities in the Our Lady of Victory Parish Confirmation Preparation Program. I agree to adhere to the requirements and meet the expectations of the program as explained in the Candidate and Family Handbook. Throughout the course of the two-year program, I will bring any questions or concerns I may have to the program coordinator as soon as possible.

Signature of Candidate

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Our Lady of Victory Parish
Confirmation Preparation Program
Confirmation Sponsor/Information Form

I, _____,

(Candidate's full name)

Confirmation Name _____ Height _____

have asked _____

(Sponsor's full name)

of _____

(Sponsor's address)

to serve as my sponsor for the sacrament of Confirmation, and he/she has accepted my invitation. I have a profound respect for my sponsor as a role model for what it means to live the Christian life. I understand a parent cannot be my sponsor. My sponsor is willing to support me in my own commitment to live a Christian life of discipleship. I certify that my sponsor is a confirmed Catholic who is 16 years of age or older; my sponsor is a registered member in good standing of the Roman Catholic Parish of*:

(Name of parish)

*Sponsors from other parishes are required to submit a sponsor certificate from their own parish.

(Address of parish)

Candidate's signature

Date

Sponsor's signature

Date

All Confirmation II candidates are asked to please return this completed form no later than the March 1.

Completed forms can be mailed to:

Our Lady of Victory Parish

Attention: Bill Bussiere

230 South Main Street

Centerville, MA 02632

Fax: 508-771-1614

Our Lady of Victory/Our Lady of the assumption Confirmation Volunteer Form

Student Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone # _____

Please Print

In 2020/2021 Students will be required to do ten hours community service. Volunteer activities could include raking your neighbor's leaves, shoving snow, watching someone's children to give them a break, coaching a team, visiting the elderly etc. Service activities should be listed here and submitted by May 1 to director.

Service Performed	How Many Hours	Adult Signature

Student Signature _____

Please complete and return by May 1 to:

Our Lady of Victory
Attn: Bill Bussiere
230 South Main Street
Centerville, MA 02632