



**Our Lady of Victory Parish &
Our Lady of the Assumption Parish
Confirmation Preparation Program
Candidate and Family Handbook
2024-2025**

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 of the Catholic Church, 1309)

Thank you for **choosing** to participate in Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption Parishes' 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 and Our Lady of the Assumption is based on John Roberto's Generations of Faith parish-based whole-community catechesis program. At our parishes, 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. Our Confirmation preparation program 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 and Our Lady of the Assumption's Confirmation Preparation Program aims to provide participants with a more profound understanding of their faith and the tools they will need to be able to continue to grow in faith after having received the sacrament of Confirmation.

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 useful for you as a candidate for Confirmation. Supplementary communications and materials will be distributed to you throughout the course of the program. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, 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, pray, and play together in the year ahead.

Summary of Confirmation Preparation at Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption

The Confirmation preparation program at Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption 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 understand 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 a confirmed member of the Church and will participate fully in the preparation process. Candidates, together with their families, are asked to read over and discuss the expectations and requirements of Our Lady of Victory and Our Lady of the Assumption's Confirmation Preparation program as stated in this handbook before signing and submitting to the program coordinator the participation agreement which is on the last page of this document. Failure to meet any of the expectations and/or complete any of the requirements 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 the source and summit of 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 at Mass 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.

Confirmation II Interview

Upon successful completion of Confirmation I, students and at least one parent must complete an interview with the Pastor/Parochial Vicar and the Confirmation Coordinator. Dates for these interviews are as follows:

Tuesday, September 17 - 5:00-6:00
Wednesday, September 18 - 6:00-7:00
Tuesday, September 24 - 5:00-6:00
Wednesday, September 25 - 6:00-7:00
Monday, September 30 - 6:00-7:00

Each date will have 4 time slots available. Please send interview request dates to faithformation@olvparish.org to schedule your interview.

After the interview, Confirmation candidates and their parents will be asked to sign the Candidate Participation Agreement, on the last page of this handbook.

Attendance and Participation

There are seven GIFT programs, Confirmation retreats, and four supplemental classes scheduled during the two years of the Confirmation preparation process. Responsible participation in a faith community is central to the sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, it is important that all candidates attend all GIFT programs each year. Candidates are advised to put the GIFT session dates on their family calendar and to try to eliminate any potential conflicts. Candidates and/or their families experiencing any concern related to this expectation should contact the program coordinator.

Attendance, however, is just the beginning! Confirmation candidates need to make the most of our time together by engaging and participating fully in 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 to share their gifts, talents, and faith so that we may learn from one another and grow in our faith 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. We believe that the sacrament of Confirmation empowers a person to live the faith in a very public way. Therefore, each candidate is expected to engage in community service. Candidates are required to complete community service for each year of participation in the Confirmation program at Our Lady of Victor and Our Lady of the Assumption.

Each year, the Confirmation program sponsors and runs the annual Children's Christmas Fair. This is a beloved tradition in our parish community usually held on the second Saturday in December. Each candidate is required to work one set up evening as well as one shift during the fair. The Children's Christmas Fair is a fun-filled event for young children and their families in our community. All of the money raised goes towards supporting our parish youth programs. More information about helping with the Children's Fair will be provided at the October and November GIFT sessions.

In addition to assisting with the Children's Christmas Fair, students are required to do one additional community service project. The project must be approved by the program coordinator. We have many community service projects at OLV and OLA including assisting at GIFT. Throughout the year we will advertise other community service opportunities. All community service must be completed by the last session of GIFT in April.

Please turn in your volunteer form (which is included in this packet) before the November GIFT session.

Parents are invited and encouraged - in fact, parents are desperately needed - to help us with the Children's Fair and/or GIFT Family involvement enriches our GIFT program and our community service events! To get involved, or to learn more about the service component of the Confirmation program, candidates and their parents are welcome to contact the program coordinator.

Retreats

Candidates are required to participate in retreat experiences during the second year of the Confirmation formation process. Confirmation II candidates will participate in a full day retreat put on by the ECHO Community or they may choose another approved retreat. The retreat experience is mandatory! Due to the holistic nature of the retreats, candidates must attend the entire duration of the retreat. They may not arrive late and/or leave early.

If a candidate cannot attend a scheduled Confirmation II retreat within the OLV & OLA Confirmation program, the candidate is responsible for finding and attending a comparable retreat experience offered by a neighboring Catholic parish, Catholic school, or Catholic youth group. Please note that most parish-based Confirmation retreats take place between September and February, so don't wait until March to try to find a retreat. Any retreat experience outside those offered by our program must be approved by the program coordinator prior to the candidate's participation in the experience.

While participation in retreat experiences offered by Catholic schools, etc., fulfill this program requirement, candidates are urged to make every attempt to attend our 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.

Confirmation Projects

Candidates in both years of the formation process must create and submit a Confirmation project.

Confirmation I

Confirmation I candidates are asked to write a one-to-two-page letter to our pastor, Fr. Mathias. 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 on or before the last GIFT session of the year in April.

- 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

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 next section 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. Saint projects are due at or before the April GIFT session.

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?
- Do you, or any family members have devotions to any saints? Who are these saints, and why are they important to you or your family members?
- Are there people in your life who have saint's names?
- 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 were they canonized? By which pope?
- How did this saint die? Were they persecuted and/or martyred for their beliefs?
- What was this saint's occupation? What did this saint's mission look like?
- What virtues did this saint practice in their life? Did this saint always practice these virtues? Did this saint experience a conversion?
- How would you describe this saint's personality?
- What miracles are attributed to this saint?
- 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 they were living in today's world?
- If this saint were to complete a Confirmation project on their own life, what kind of project would they create?

Projects do not have to be written reports. 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 your imagination! Projects are due by the April GIFT session.

Candidates may work together with family, friends, or fellow candidates to complete their projects. However, as with school projects, plagiarism within this project component of the program is not acceptable. All sources used in completing the projects, including Catholic.org and other websites, must be properly cited and credited. Questions about plagiarism and the proper citation of sources should be directed to the program coordinator. 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, or reverence required for participation in this program.

Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor

It is customary for Confirmation Candidates to choose a Confirmation sponsor. The sponsor may be one of the Candidate's Baptismal Godparents, or another adult friend or relative who will support the Candidate for Sponsors are required to:

- 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 may not be their child's sponsor.

Confirmation II candidates will select a sponsor before the March GIFT session. Each candidate-sponsor pair will need to complete and submit a sponsorship form (included in 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 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 will be published on the OLVGIFT.com website. 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.

Important Confirmation I & II Dates and Deadlines

October GIFT session - Signed Participation Agreement - (included in the handbook) is due

November GIFT session - Volunteer Form - (included in the handbook) is due

December - The Children's Christmas Fair - Saturday, December 14, from 8:00AM - 12:30PM.
Set-up will take place on December 11, 12, and 13 from 6:30 - 8pm

March - Stations of the Cross - One of the Fridays in March - TBD

Confirmation I

April GIFT session - Letter to Fr. Mathias is due

Confirmation II

Confirmation II Retreat: (More retreat opportunities will be added as needed.)

Saturday, November 16, 2024 - OLV Parish Center & Church 9:00AM - 5:30PM

Confirmation II Supplemental Classes: OLV Parish Center (To be attended with a parent)

Sunday, November 24, 2024 4:00 - 6:30PM

Sunday, January 26, 2025 4:00 - 6:30PM

Sunday, March 2, 2025 4:00 - 6:30PM

*Sunday, April 13, 2025 4:00 - 6:30PM *Penance Service

March GIFT session - Sponsor/Information form (included in the handbook) is due
- Saint project due.

May - Rehearsal and Confirmation - Candidates and Sponsors should plan to attend Confirmation. Confirmation dates are set by the diocese. We expect to announce the date in December. Rehearsal dates are scheduled once we have the Confirmation date.

GIFT SESSIONS

Candidates and families are asked to register for the GIFT/Confirmation program as soon as possible. Candidates and families may choose from the chart below which GIFT session times work best for them. Seven GIFT programs will be held each year starting in October and ending in April.

GIFT session dates	GIFT session times
October 6, 2024 November 3, 2024 December 8, 2024 January 12, 2025 February 2, 2025 February 9, 2025 (Snow Date - if necessary) March 9, 2025 April 6, 2025	Sunday Morning-Afternoon (10:30- 2:00PM) or Sunday Evening (5:00 - 8:30 PM)

Miscellaneous Information

GIFT Registration

- \$50 registration fee per participant for each year of formation in the parish GIFT program (with a family maximum of \$150)
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.
- \$20 additional registration fee per candidate in Confirmation I
This fee helps to cover the cost of supplementary Confirmation program materials.
- \$40 additional registration fee per candidate in Confirmation II
This fee helps to cover the cost of the 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. At the time of 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: Maureen Hufnagle

Address: Our Lady of Victory Parish
Faith Formation
230 South Main Street
Centerville, MA 02632
Phone: 508-775-5744 ext. 119
Fax: 508-771-1614
Email: Faithformation@olvparish.org

Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption Confirmation Volunteer Form

Student Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone # _____

Please Print

Below are the **Children's Christmas Fair** service times. Each Confirmation Student is **required** to volunteer to assist for at least 2 shifts for the Children's Christmas Fair.

Please check two shifts below:

Children's Christmas Fair Set-up - Many hands are needed for set-up

Wednesday December 11 6:30pm - 8pm _____

Thursday December 12 6:30pm - 8pm _____

Friday December 13 6:30pm - 8pm _____

Children's Christmas Fair Saturday, December 14th

8:30am - 10:30am _____

10:30am - 12:30pm _____

Students are also required to do an additional community service project. The project must be approved by the program coordinator. We have many community service projects at OLV & OLA including assisting at GIFT. Throughout the year we will present community service opportunities. All community service must be completed by the last GIFT session in April.

I plan to _____

_____ as my additional community service project.

_____ I need help finding another community service project.

Student Signature _____

Please return by November GIFT to:

Our Lady of Victory
Faith Formation
230 South Main Street
Centerville, MA 02632

**Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption
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 they have accepted my invitation. I have a profound respect for my sponsor as a role model for what it means to live the Christian faith. My sponsor is willing to support me in my own commitment to live a Christian faith and a 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 return this completed form before the March GIFT session.

Completed forms can also be mailed to:

**Our Lady of Victory Parish
Faith Formation
230 South Main Street
Centerville, MA 02632
Fax: 508-771-1614**

Our Lady of Victory & Our Lady of the Assumption

Our Lady of the Assumption & Our Lady of Victory Confirmation Preparation Program

Candidate Participation Agreement

I, _____, willingly present myself as a candidate to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of the Assumption or 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 described 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.
- Because knowledge and understanding are priceless gifts, I am expected to create and submit a Confirmation project each year, 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 in the Our Lady of the Assumption & 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