

Dear Confirmation parents,

9/14/08

Welcome! We are about to embark on a very exciting journey which will bring your son/daughter into full communion with the church! Confirmation is the last of the three initiation sacraments (Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation.) Think of it as rite of passage, a joyful but sacred celebration, like a bar-mitzvah, that celebrates a person's entry into the church, the body of Christ, as an adult. When a person is confirmed in the church, he is standing before God to make a covenant that says "I believe, I love you and I agree to serve you and others through this church." They have worked very hard through the past years of CCD to prepare for this very moment. You can help your child to understand the importance of this time in their spiritual life by *encouraging and supporting their full participation and attendance in all the classes and events* scheduled this year. Here are some of the things we will need from you this year in order for your child to be confirmed, along with a brief explanation. [All forms are due January 11th.](#)

1. **Signed/dated copy of Baptismal certificate and form** from Church where child was baptized. Confirmation is a very important sacrament in the church, because it completes your child's incorporation into the "body of Christ" which is the church. It completes that sacramental process which was begun in baptism, so it calls for a renewal of the baptismal vows, and verification that the sacrament of baptism was received. To verify this, the Bishop needs to see a **copy of your child's baptismal certificate from the church in which he was baptised.** *If you are an active parishioner there should already be a copy of your child's baptismal certificate on file at St. Stephen's, if not, you will need to call the church of your child's baptism, and have them send a copy to you. You will need to have a rough idea of the year your child was baptized, in order for the church secretary to access it.
2. **Sponsor Form** Baptism requires a sponsor, or "witness" who testifies that the child understands and is prepared to receive the sacrament. This sponsor **must be a Catholic in good standing** and should be 18 or older. A Godparent, Uncle or Aunt or former Catechist would be ideal. Please consider this carefully.
3. **Service Hours** Since your child is becoming part of the body of Christ, which is the church, he must begin to take upon himself the mission of the church and participate in the life of the church by performing the spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, caring for the poor, the sick, etc. and spreading the gospel of Christ. We will be organizing a few fun and interesting service days this year, where we will work together as group to perform these acts of service. We will provide you with these dates as soon as possible. If your child is unable to attend any of these service days, he will need to perform that number of verifiable hours of service elsewhere (ie. Seven Loaves, soup kitchen etc.) We really urge you to take advantage of these group days so that the kids can learn the joy of serving Christ and others *together*. This shows them what it means to be a church!
4. **Saint Report** This will be assigned during the second semester. We are doing something a little different this year. The report will be presented on a piece of poster board, collage style, with a brief biography of the saint, pictures and an explanation of why that saint was chosen as patron. Each student will make a brief presentation of his Patron Saint to the class. We will discuss in class the role as special guide and intercessor that this Saint will play in the spiritual journey of your

- child. For this reason the choice of Saint is very important. The Saint should have a personal connection to your child, not necessarily similar name, but rather a similar personality, background or interest, such as St Francis of Assisi for a child with a particular love of nature or animals. They may choose a saint of the opposite sex, but remember, that name will be stated during the ceremony. Please discuss any saints that have special meaning to you with your son/daughter.
5. **Retreat Permission slip** This day retreat, the highpoint of the year, directed by Father Mike Kuhn, Youth Apostle, is mandatory. Since they will be incorporating into the body of Christ, they will spend a day like the apostles: eating, playing games and spending time together, and participating in mass and formation activities. They will also have an opportunity to have confession/reconciliation. They will need this sacrament in order to be confirmed. The retreat has not yet been scheduled but I will pass on that information as soon as I receive it. It will probably be scheduled for Presidents Day Monday Feb 16th. If your child does not have this day as a school holiday, I can provide a permission slip for the school. I encourage you to look at the beautiful setting and facility on the website www.villageofmountzion.org. We will meet in the morning and travel to the center where we will be joined by the classes at St Katherine Drexel. About 50 students will attend. Time and transportation details will be forthcoming. If any parents can help as supervisors and leaders please let me know!
 6. **Field Trip Permission Slips** we will have a fall and a spring field trip, together with 7th grade. One will be to the John Paul II Center, and one will be to the Franciscan Shrine of the Holy Land, both in NW Washington DC. We will have lunch together and carpool into the city. This is a “hands on” interactive way to learn about their faith while having fun together. More details to come...

The Confirmation date has not yet been set, but will take place some time during the month of May. We will inform you of that date as soon as we receive it from the Bishop, so that you can plan a great celebration and invite your loved ones to this very important occasion! We are looking forward to a great year and are grateful that you have entrusted us with the opportunity to share our love for Christ and the Church with your children!

God Bless,
Carla Passarello and Sue Carter