

CONFIRMATION PARENT PACKET 2024/25

The information about St. Helen's Confirmation Program is provided to inform both parents and students. It describes a two (2) year period of preparation in which all those seeking to receive confirmation must participate. This includes those students who attend Catholic school.

It is expected that those in the preparation program will (use weekly Mass vouchers to achieve 80% attendance) **attend Mass** on Sundays and Holy days in accordance with our obligations as Catholics, regularly **use the Sacrament of Penance**, achieve a deeper knowledge of what Catholics believe by studying materials provided and participating in class discussions, and attend youth group meetings & take part in service days in order to make a mature decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Those unwilling or unable to fulfill these requirements will delay their reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation until that time in which they are able to do what is expected.

A student starting grade 8 may begin confirmation preparation if he or she has attended religious education classes consistently each year prior. In grade 9, students will complete their preparation and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Spring.

CLASSES

Classes begin in September for students. Schedules will be given out at the beginning of the year at the Parent meeting for year one and two preparation.

The Canon Law of the Catholic Church requires that all Confirmation Candidates be "suitably instructed". This means that the person should have a working knowledge of what Christ's Church teaches about the gospel of Jesus and His way of life. The Diocese of Palm Beach expects that there will be a substantial instructional program. St. Helen Parish provides this by using a program that is thought provoking and challenging, but when mastered, can help the young person beyond their high school years to even when he or she enters college life. St. Helen Confirmation Program anticipates the questions that all young people ultimately ask about the truth of their faith. The Program covers the doctrine of the Church on God and salvation, as well as the moral life we are to lead, and the Sacraments which aid us in living that life. The time spent in study now can help that young person to avoid many religious pitfalls in the future. Weekly Youth group gatherings are led by our Youth Minister is also a vital part of the Confirmation program and must be attended twice a week. See schedule for dates.

All classes are to be attended and those missed must be made up, even if missed for the reason of sickness or because of some pressing family need. Make-up arrangements will be made through the Confirmation instructor. Weekend Mass attendance is expected and necessary if one is to be serious in their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. **Students must have their Mass Voucher with Parish ID # turned in after Mass to a Priest or Deacon each week.**

TEACHERS

Our certified Catechists, besides being faithful in their practice of the faith, must have the zeal necessary to teach the young at an age in which they often ask deep questions. We ask the parents to give full support to the teachers in our program.

DISCIPLINE

It is expected that the students in our confirmation program will do all the assigned readings in preparation for each class, pay attention to the teachers during class, and participate in the discussions to the best of their ability. It is also expected that the students will give their confirmation teachers the respect that all young ladies and gentlemen naturally give to adults who are so generous in their time and wisdom to the young. Those students presenting themselves as consistent discipline problems will be told that they may leave the program and perhaps re-enter it the following year once they have matured. Attendance is vital to the preparation classes. Missed classes and work must be made up. Arrangements can be made with the teacher.

Cell phone/Apple watch policy: Students will be asked to place their cell phone in a basket at the beginning of class and will pick them up following class.

Dress Code: Jeans (NO tears) and t shirt is the dress code. Khaki's ok. NO shorts, NO leggings. Parents will be called if student is out of dress code.

Student Commitment Form: Students will agree to and sign the Confirmation Program Commitment form so all expectations are spelled out at the start of the program. Parents signature is also required.

FEES/ Year 1 & 2

A Registration fee for Year One is \$100 and due in September. Year Two Registration fee is \$150 which includes the student's confirmation gown, yearly retreat, and materials. These fees are also due in September. No young person will be prevented from participating in our program because of financial hardship. If this is the case, please call the Director at 562-5954 to work out arrangements.

SERVICE PROJECTS/YEAR 1 & 2

Confirmation Year 1 & 2 candidates must complete 15 & 20 Service points gained by giving service. Documentation of Service hours must be tallied. ALL forms for Confirmation are on our Church website: www.sthelenvero.org. Year 1 will complete 15 Service hours, Sponsor form, and Saint report. In year 2 you will write a reflective paper on your experience with service (20 hrs.) a letter to the Pastor. You are always welcome to call the office at 562-5954 to speak to the Director for more information.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT YEAR TWO

Each year the Year Two Confirmation students have a retreat day in the parish. It lasts for the entire day, from 9:00 A.M. to 5 P.M. **Attendance is mandatory!** Please make all the necessary arrangements with jobs, sports etc. so that candidates are available that day. **Retreat day for the 2024-2025 is March 8, 2025. All year 2 students will also have a personal interview by a Priest of Deacon on their last scheduled class date in the gym on March 11.**

DATE OF CONFIRMATION AND FINAL MEETING

The parish requests the date and time of the actual Confirmation Mass, but is determined by the Bishop of the Diocese of Palm Beach. Such determination is dependent upon the availability of the bishop to come and confirm our students. We have Confirmation in the Spring on a Friday evening at 5:30 p.m. Date TBA.

THE CONFIRMATION MASS

It is important that we fit the confirmation candidates schedule around the date we are given for the Confirmation Mass. This helps to teach the young that religion is more important and other such things. Attire during the Confirmation Mass for both candidates and sponsors will be Sunday's best, respecting Christian modesty and Church tradition. Although at Mass their Confirmation robe will be worn, boys are to wear collared shirts with ties, dress pants and shoes. Please, no sneakers. Girls are to wear dresses that (of course) are modest and dignified. NO spaghetti straps. GUIDE: Dress with sleeves, modest necklines, length touching the top of the knee. NO short dresses.

CONFIRMATION SAINT NAME

Students first name can use their given first name, provided it is a Catholic saint name. Students can also choose an existing Catholic saint's name. Visit www.catholicsaints.com for ideas and reference. **Students will choose and complete their Saint Report in the 1st year of Confirmation.**

SPONSORS

The sponsor has an important position in the life of the confirmation candidate. It is essential that such a person be a true example of Catholic life. It is contradictory to the entire purpose of confirmation in the Church to have a sponsor who does not attend Holy Mass, or who in some way lives contrary to what the Faith guides us to live. The law of the Church also prohibits this. Please do not ask someone who does not practice the Faith to be a confirmation sponsor. It is appropriate for godparents who are practicing Catholics to be confirmation sponsors. A mother or father CANNOT be a Sponsor. It is recommended the Sponsor is local, one that can walk with the student during their service and attend Mass with them. If not possible, the Sponsor must meet the criteria: Complete the Sponsor form, submit documents, be registered at a Catholic church, have all Sacraments to include confirmation, and if married, married in the Catholic Church. The Sponsor can be a single person, provided they meet the other criteria.

PAPERWORK

The **baptismal certificate** of the young person who enters our program is due in September of their First year of preparation with their registration form. If your child was baptized at St. Helen and you do not have a copy of their baptism, please contact the parish office at 567-5129 and request a copy. If your student was baptized at a different parish and you do not have a copy, please contact that parish directly to request one. A Registration form must be completed for each student. **It is vital we have a working, regularly checked email & phone parent contact information so parent and student can stay in tune with what is due, coming up or announcements.** Confirmation Registrations can be acquired by stopping by the Religious Education Office (2005 Tallahassee Av.) and for your convenience, online under Sacraments/Confirmation on our church website. (www.sthelenvero.org) All other forms as well can be accessed online: Saint report, Sponsor form, Letter to Pastor, Service requirements & service tracking form.

THE DECISION OF THE STUDENT

The following is a rather "sticky issue". The canon law of the Church requires that the confirmation candidate be able to "renew one's baptismal promises" in order to receive the sacrament. This points out that it is ultimately the recipient's free will decision whether to be confirmed or not. The sacrament is never to be conferred against the will of the student. Only one with a living faith who wishes to be "sealed with the Holy Spirit" can be the recipient of that gift. It should be clear therefore that while young people might rightly be "forced" by their parents to go to classes, they should not be forced to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. This sacrament is ultimately about their relationship with God for which they should take the responsibility. A final personal interview is conducted in Year Two to allow the student to freely express their willingness and readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

DIRECTORS AND INFORMATION

For any concerns or for more information please feel free to call the St. Helen Religious Education office at 562-5954 Monday- Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. You will want to speak to Paige Fies, the Director of Religious Education or Lupe Garcia, Instructor. We will be happy to meet and listen to your questions and concerns.