

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION 2020-2021

*“You will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you,
and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8)*

The Confirmation Preparation program at Saint Bernadette Church is designed to:

- Prepare Confirmation candidates (confirmandi), through their religious education classes, to understand and explain our Catholic faith.
- Incorporate confirmandi into the parish community through Confirmation Preparation activities. These will bring together all confirmation candidates, regardless of where they go to school.
- Provide opportunities for our confirmandi to serve others in both the neighborhood and parish communities.
- Strengthen the faith and spirituality of families through parent and family programs.
- Prepare confirmandi for their active role in the celebration of the sacrament.

Confirmation is one of the sacraments of initiation (along with Baptism and Holy Communion). The Catechism (paragraph #1303) notes that Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- It roots us more deeply in the Divine filiation (becoming sons and daughters of God).
- It unites us more firmly to Christ.
- It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us.
- It renders our bond with the Church more perfect.
- It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by work and action as true witnesses of Christ to confess the name of Christ boldly and never to be ashamed of the Cross.

In order to help your child grow in holiness as he or she prepares for Confirmation, consider the following:

- Pray with your children, pray for your children, fix times for individual and family prayer.
- Have them read books about saints and visit local shrines.
- Read the Bible, especially the Gospels, as a family.
- Be faithful to the Sacraments – bring your family to Sunday Mass every Sunday, bring your family to Confession (especially during Advent and Lent).
- Spend time in Eucharistic Adoration.

Confirmation Details

Confirmation preparation is ongoing throughout the entire school year. Confirmandi will go on a retreat and will be encouraged to serve our parish and local community. Confirmandi will choose and research a new patron saint and will also prepare a letter for the bishop. Please read the following sections carefully to ensure that your child is fully prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Director of Religious Education: All paperwork and questions should be directed to Neil Sloan, the parish Director of Religious Education. You can reach him at reled@stbernadetteschurch.org or by leaving a message at the rectory (301-593-0357). The DRE office is located at the front end of the School Hall.

Date of Confirmation and Rehearsal: TBD. We are waiting for the Archdiocese to schedule our Confirmation Mass. We typically have the Mass on a Wednesday evening at 7pm during March. The Confirmation practice is typically held the night before (for Confirmandi and sponsors). More details will be sent out once a Confirmation date is settled.

Dress Code for Confirmation: The confirmandi will wear a rented Confirmation gown. However, they should still dress for the occasion. Young gentlemen should wear a button-down dress shirt, dress pants, tie and dress shoes. Generally, a sport coat or a suit is also worn. Sneakers of any type are not allowed. Young ladies should wear a dress, or a skirt and top, and dress shoes. Length of the dress/skirt should be no shorter than two inches above the knee. High heels are not advised. Outfits with spaghetti straps or low-cut/"plunging" fronts or backs are not permitted.

Photographs: We ask that no photographs be taken during the ceremony itself. Pictures may be taken in the church after Mass, and the bishop will pose with the group of newly confirmed. We will have a professional photographer to take pictures of the Mass. Those photos will be available for purchase.

Reception After Confirmation: There will be a dessert reception in the school hall immediately following Mass, graciously hosted by our seventh grade families. All are invited to attend.

Confirmation Preparation Plans and Requirements

Registration and Fee – Online Registration: All confirmation candidates must be registered with the Religious Ed office. Registration should be completed online at <http://silverspringcatholic.com/religious-education-submit/> The fee for the registration for Confirmation preparation is \$145. This fee covers the materials, retreat, certificates, gown rental, and reception costs. Financial assistance is available for those who need it.

Parish Registration: It is typically expected and encouraged that children will receive sacraments at their home parish. If you are not a registered parishioner of Saint Bernadette, but would like your child to celebrate Confirmation here, please ask your pastor to send a letter noting his approval to Msgr. Smith. This letter is due by January 17th, 2021.

Religious Education Classes: Two consecutive years of religious education are required for Confirmation. This is typically fulfilled in 7th and 8th grade. Saint Bernadette school students receive this education during the school day. Students attending public school and homeschool should sign up for Religious Education classes on Sundays. Students attending other private Catholic schools should consult the DRE about religious education expectations.

Baptismal Records to be sent to Saint Bernadette Church by January 17th, 2021

If the candidate was baptized at St. Bernadette, no action is required. All other candidates are asked to submit a newly issued Baptismal certificate as soon as possible – but no later than January 17th, 2021. To submit the necessary Baptismal record, contact the parish where the confirmand was baptized (via phone, letter, or email) and request that a certificate be sent. You can make this most direct by asking that it be sent to Saint Bernadette Catholic Church, Attention: DRE/Confirmation, 70 University E., Silver Spring, MD 20901. The baptism certificate must be a newly issued (2020/2021) official copy. It should include the pastor's signature and the parish seal.

Choosing a Confirmation Name

Confirmandi will adopt a new patron saint name. They will research saints with their teachers and select a new patron saint. They should have chosen their patron saint and informed their teacher of their choice by February 7th.

Choosing a Sponsor

Confirmandi will invite someone to serve as their sponsor. This person will be an example of the Catholic faith to them and will share in their preparation and faith development. See the "Sponsor Selection Form" below for more details. The "Sponsor Selection Form" is due to the DRE by January 17th, 2021. The "Sponsor Certificate" from the sponsor's parish is due by February 8th.

Letter to the Bishop

Each candidate writes a letter requesting confirmation and describes what he/she has completed in preparation for confirmation. The letter is addressed to the bishop (the bishop celebrating our Confirmation Mass is still TBD) who will confirm him/her and is due to his/her catechist by February 7th. The bishop really does read these!

Service

Service is not a requirement of the sacramental grace received in Confirmation. However, we encourage your confirmand to engage in service in a way that is fitting with his or her interests, abilities, and schedules. We will strongly encourage confirmandi to engage in two forms of service: a work of mercy, or service to persons in need, and a parish life experience, in order to serve and participate in our parish community. Confirmandi will be given instructions from their catechists to complete a written reflection of their service experiences by February 8th.

CONFIRMATION CHECKLIST

Due January 17th: _____ Baptism Certificate (to DRE)
_____ Parish Registration or Pastor's Letter (If applicable)
_____ Sponsor Selection Form (to DRE)
_____ Confirmation Patron Saint Choice (to Catechist)

Due February 7th: _____ Sponsor Certificate (to DRE)
_____ Service Reflection (to Catechist)
_____ Letter to the Bishop (to Catechist)
_____ Gown Measurements (taken in class)

CONFIRMATION CALENDAR

Confirmation Retreat on Monday, February 1st, 2021

The required Confirmation Retreat will take place on Monday, February 1st, from 3pm-8:30pm at Saint Bernadette Church. A group of young adults from NET Ministries will run the retreat. More details will be sent out in January.

Rehearsal

TBD, usually on a Tuesday evening at 7:30pm (the night before Confirmation). Confirmandi should bring their sponsors to the rehearsal if possible. Confirmandi will receive their Confirmation gowns.

Confirmation Mass: TBD, usually a Wednesday evening in March at 7:00pm. A reception will follow in the school hall.

Sponsor Selection Form

(Due to the Religious Education Office by January 17th, 2021)

Confirmand Name: _____

Sponsor Name: _____

Relationship to Confirmand: _____

I have given the **Sponsor Certificate** to my sponsor. He/she is aware that the Sponsor Certificate needs to be signed by his/her pastor (and affixed with the parish seal) and is due to the DRE at St. Bernadette Church by February 7th, 2021.

_____ (Confirmand's Signature)

*If your sponsor is a priest, deacon, seminarian, or religious brother or sister, please note that here:

Sponsor Guidelines and Sponsor Certificate

A sponsor should be an active and informed Catholic who is willing and eager to accompany the confirmand through the process of preparation and into the fullness of life in Christ's Church. The sponsor should be someone who will continue to be a spiritual guide for the confirmand beyond the coming year.

A Sponsor is at least 16 years of age; has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church; if married, is validly married according to the norms of the Roman Catholic Church; is a registered and active parishioner of a Roman Catholic parish; and attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. A parent cannot be their child's sponsor.

Here are some suggestions for your sponsor: Your godmother or godfather (this highlights the connection between your Baptism and Confirmation); A good Catholic role model in your life such as a teacher, coach, scout leader, neighbor, or family friend; Someone who already has a relationship of trust with you and who you like; Is someone willing to share his or her faith; Lives locally (preferably) so the sponsor can be present throughout the Confirmation process.

70 University Boulevard East
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

SPONSOR CERTIFICATE

I, _____
(Sponsor's Name) (Sponsor's Address)

a REGISTERED & PRACTICING MEMBER of

(Name of Parish) (City and State of Parish)

accept the Invitation to be the Sponsor at the Confirmation of

(Candidate's name)

at Saint Bernadette Church, in Silver Spring, Maryland.

In accepting this responsibility I truthfully affirm the following:

I am not the parent of the person mentioned above;

I am at least sixteen (16) years old;

I have received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation) in
the Catholic Church;

If married, I was married in the Catholic Church, or at least with the approval of the
Catholic Church;

I attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and have received the
Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion at least once in the past year;

I understand and accept the responsibility which I undertake as a Sponsor, and I promise
to offer my support and example to the person named above in his/her efforts to live
a life of holiness that reflects the Spirit and Teaching authority of the Catholic
Church.

Signature of Sponsor

**I certify that to the best of my knowledge this person is capable
of assuming the Duties and Responsibilities of a Sponsor.**

PARISH SEAL

Signature of Pastor