

# Saint Bernadette Church

## **Confirmation**

Sacramental Preparation 2023-2024

FAQ and Parent Check List

Confirmation Mass: Wednesday, February 28, 7:00pm

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

### **WHAT**

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

- **Prepare** Confirmation candidates (confirmandi) to understand and explain our Catholic faith, and to prepare confirmandi for their active role in the celebration of the sacrament.
- **Initiate** 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 our parish communities.
- **Encourage** the faith and spirituality of families through parent and family programs.

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.

## Confirmation Preparation and Requirements

In order to prepare our candidates for Confirmation, it is required that our confirmandi will have completed the following prior to Confirmation:

1. **Two consecutive years** of religious education and faith formation leading up to the sacrament of Confirmation.
2. **A Confirmation retreat** with his or her parish confirmandi.
3. **An Act of Service:** a work of mercy that touches a parish life experience.
4. With their families, confirmandi will attend and contribute to a **Lenten Simple Supper and Stations of the Cross at Saint Bernadette parish** on either February 16th or February 23rd (A sign-up will be sent. Of course, you may attend both!).
5. **3 written pieces:** 1 Saint Essay, 1 Service Reflection Essay, and a Letter to the Bishop requesting Confirmation.

Along with fulfilling these requirements, a **newly issued and sealed baptismal record** and a **signed and sealed sponsor certificate** must be obtained for each candidate. If you are a registered and practicing member of another parish, you will also need to obtain a letter of permission from your pastor.

## **Religious Education Requirements for Confirmation**

At least two consecutive years of religious education and formation are required for those seeking to receive Confirmation with our parish community. That said, we are blessed with a lively parish that represents the many stripes of our Church and the different options parents have of ensuring faith formation and religious education for their child. Please take a moment to review the following requirements. The steps you need to take may be different based on the instruction your child receives during the school year.

### **SAINT BERNADETTE PARISH STUDENTS**

Saint Bernadette parish students who attend public schools or other schools not based on Catholic curricula fulfill their religious education requirement by enrolling in our parish CCD program for (at least) their 7th and 8th grade year for Confirmation. Students who have received religious instruction from a different parish in a previous year should consult with the DRE.

### **SBS STUDENTS**

SBS Catholic students fulfill this requirement during their 7th and 8th grade year for Confirmation.

### **SAINT BERNADETTE STUDENTS WHO ATTEND OTHER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OR HOMESCHOOL WITH A CATHOLIC CURRICULA**

Saint Bernadette parish students who attend other Catholic schools or who homeschool with Catholic curricula fulfill this requirement in a similar manner (two consecutive years of religious instruction at a different Catholic school or homeschool with a Catholic curricula prior to receiving the sacrament of Confirmation). Additionally, in order to *fully appreciate the initiation gifted through the sacrament they are seeking*, these Saint Bernadette parish students are asked to join their parish community for religious instruction in CCD class during January and February of their sacrament year.

**All students** seeking the sacrament of Confirmation this year should register for Religious Education at [www.silverspringcatholic.com](http://www.silverspringcatholic.com).

**SBS Students and students who attend a school with Catholic curricula** only need to register and pay the sacramental prep fee.

**Religious Ed. students** should register and pay for their CCD enrollment in addition to the sacramental prep fee.

Scholarships, tuition assistance and alternative tuition payment plans are available. Please see the DRE to discuss.

### **Confirmation Retreat**

The mandatory Confirmation Retreat will take place on Sunday, October 15th, from 2pm until 8pm at Saint Bernadette Church. A group of young adults from NET Ministries will run the retreat. The opportunity to house NET ministers is a chance at a meaningful service experience as a family (and counts as a work of service that confirmandi can write about in their reflection!). Parent help is needed to help facilitate small tasks (sign-in, meal service, etc.) on the day of the retreat. More details will be shared as we approach the retreat.

### **An Act of Service**

All confirmandi should immediately choose an act of service in preparation for Confirmation. In order to know the gift of initiation that they are asking from this sacrament, this corporal or spiritual work of mercy should touch a parish life experience. Confirmandi will take some time to review works of mercy with their catechists, but an act of service should be chosen quickly so as to allow confirmandi ample time to reflect on their act of service.

A list of suggested and available service opportunities will be available at the Parent Confirmation Meeting on September 17th, 2023.

### **Lenten Simple Supper and Stations (Family Retreat)**

A spiritual retreat refreshes and revitalizes, gives the opportunity for more time spent in prayer and contemplation, and rekindles and deepens one's relationship with God. In addition to a student retreat, Saint Bernadette confirmandi and their families will make a family retreat. Visits to nearby shrines and other holy places are examples of retreats our parish has taken in the past.

This year, our family retreat will be at our very own parish. Confirmandi and their families will attend Stations of the Cross and contribute to the parish Simple Supper. Two date options are available for Stations of the Cross: February 16th and February 23rd. Confirmandi families will pick at least one to attend together to fulfill their family retreat requirement.

### **3 Written Essays, including 1 Letter to The Bishop**

3 written essays, including 1 letter to the bishop are required of each Confirmandi. The first essay will be a research paper about the student's chosen Confirmation patron saint. The second essay will be a service reflection piece that states what work of mercy the student chose in preparation for Confirmation, and how this opportunity allowed them to be an active member of their parish community. The third written piece is a formal letter to the bishop requesting the sacrament of Confirmation.

SBS students and Saint Bernadette Religious Ed. students will have further instruction on these pieces and time to work on these written pieces in class. However, parents should be reasonable and expect - as with all assignments - that time at home could and should be spent on these pieces.

## Confirmation DUE DATES

### **DUE: October 1st, 2023**

Registration and Fee – Online Registration: All confirmation candidates must be registered with the Religious Ed office by October 1st, 2023. Registration should be completed online at <http://silverspringcatholic.com/religious-education-submit/> The fee for the registration for Confirmation preparation is \$150. This fee covers the materials, retreat, certificates, gown rental, and reception costs. Financial assistance is available for those who need it.

### **DUE: December 1st/3rd 2023**

#### Choosing a Sponsor

Confirmandi will invite someone to serve as their sponsor. This person is a **practicing Catholic in good standing** and will be an example of the Catholic faith to them and will share in their preparation and faith development.

Confirmandi should prayerfully consider who to invite to fulfill this important role. Once a sponsor has been selected, confirmand should complete the **“Sponsor Selection Form” (see page 9)** and submit to the DRE office.

The **“Sponsor Selection Form”** is due to the DRE by December 1st/3rd, 2023. Nominated sponsors should waste no time in requesting the signed and approved **“Sponsor Certificate”** from their parish. Their signed Sponsor Certificate should be sent to the DRE as soon as they have secured the certificate and no later than February 2nd, 2024.

### **DUE: December 15th/17th, 2023**

Confirmation Patron Saint Essay

### **DUE: January 5th, 2024**

Pastor Permission: 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 5th/7th, 2024.

#### Baptismal Records to be sent to Saint Bernadette Church by January 5th, 2024

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 5th, 2024. 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: Jasmine Kuzner, DRE  
70 University East  
Silver Spring, MD  
20901

The baptism certificate must be a newly issued (2023/2024) official copy. It should include the pastor’s signature and the parish seal.

**DUE: January 19th/21st, 2024**

Service Reflection essay due.

**DUE: February 2nd, 2024**

Sponsor Certificate

All sponsors, **including sponsors who are practicing Catholics and registered parishioners of Saint Bernadette parish**, will submit a request to their pastor for approval and signature.

The “Sponsor Certificate” from the sponsor’s parish is due by February 2nd. (See page 10)  
Sponsors should have this certificate filled out and have it sent to the DRE at St. Bernadette.

**DUE: February 2nd/4th, 2024**

Letter to the bishop is due.

Each candidate writes a letter requesting confirmation and describes what he/she has completed in preparation for confirmation. The bishop really does read these!

## **CONFIRMATION GENERAL INFORMATION**

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. Outfits with spaghetti straps or low-cut 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 immediately following Mass, graciously hosted by our seventh grade families. All are invited to attend.

Questions? Contact Jasmine Kuzner, the parish Director of Religious Education. You can reach her at [reled@stbernadetteschurch.org](mailto:reled@stbernadetteschurch.org) or at (301) 593-5611 x333. The DRE office is located in the school, adjacent to the entrance to the chapel.

### **CONFIRMATION CHECKLIST (check box once complete)**

- |                         |                          |   |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Due October 1st:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Registration Complete   |
| Due December 1st/3rd:   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sponsor Selection Form  |
| Due December 15th/17th: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron Saint Essay  |
| Due January 5th:        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newly Issued Baptism Certificate (to DRE)                       |
|                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parish Registration or Pastor's Letter (If applicable)          |
| Due January 7th (RelEd) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gown Measurements (taken in class. SBS will complete in school) |
| Due January 19th/21st   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Service Reflection Essay Due                                    |
| Due February 2nd/4th:   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Signed and Sealed Sponsor Certificate (to DRE)                  |
|                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Letter to the Bishop (to Catechist/Teacher)                     |

## CONFIRMATION CALENDAR

### **OCTOBER 15th, 2023 2-8pm: NET Retreat**

Mandatory retreat for all Saint Bernadette confirmandi. We will meet in the MSR at Saint Bernadette.

### **FEBRUARY 16th and/or 23rd: Stations of the Cross and Simple Supper**

All confirmandi and their families will attend at least one Stations of the Cross and Simple Supper to complete their family retreat requirement. A sign-up and more details will be published in Lent.

### **FEBRUARY 27th, 2024: Confirmation Rehearsal**

Tuesday, February 27th, evening at 7pm (the night before Confirmation). Confirmandi should bring their sponsors to the rehearsal if possible. Confirmandi will receive their Confirmation gowns.

### **FEBRUARY 28th, 2024: Confirmation Mass**

Wednesday, February, 28th at 7:00pm. A reception in the school hall will follow.



# Sponsor Selection Form

(Due to the Religious Education Office by December 1st/3rd, 2023)

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 2nd, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ (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.

SAINT BERNADETTE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Confirmation Preparation Program  
70 University Boulevard East  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

**SPONSOR CERTIFICATE**

Due to the Religious Education Office by February 2, 2024

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