



# Confirmation Handbook

2025–2026



# IGNITE<sup>2026</sup>

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Come Holy Spirit

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**Stella Maris**  
FAMILY OF PARISHES

# PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created,  
and you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful  
by the light of the Holy Spirit,  
grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise  
and ever rejoice in his consolation.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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# Dear Parents,

When John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, heaven was opened “and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Lk. 3:22). The Father seals the Son’s baptism with an expression of love, affirmation, and commitment.



Remember, Jesus had yet to begin his ministry when he was baptized and his Father confirmed his love for his beloved Son. The Father was pleased with Jesus not because of anything he had done, but because of who Jesus is. The Father was pleased with Jesus just because Jesus was his Son — and he lets his Son know it. And because of this affirmation, the Son moves forward in carrying out his mission.

This is an image of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In baptism, we are adopted as God’s sons and daughters. We are given the gift of the Holy Spirit — God’s love “poured” into our hearts (cf. Rom. 5:5). The Sacrament of Confirmation completes the Sacrament of Baptism by sealing that gift, by confirming that we are His beloved sons and daughters and he is pleased with us. God adopted us, God loves us, and God wants to confirm that relationship in the Sacrament of Confirmation that we might join in the mission of the Son.

It is the parish’s responsibility to invite baptized Catholics to seal that baptism at an appropriate time and has determined that a child’s 8th grade year is a suitable time. So, the Church invites your child to present him or herself for the Sacrament of Confirmation. We encourage you to assist your child in discerning this step. You might consider the following questions to guide a conversation:

- How has God been present to you throughout your life? What would your life be like without Jesus and the Catholic Church?
- In Baptism, “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). In Confirmation, this love is strengthened and sealed as his gift to us. He is offering you the gift of his love. Would you like to receive it? Why or why not?
- The parish is entrusted with helping parents prepare their children for Confirmation. Would you like to initiate the process of being Confirmed by entering into the parish’s formation process?

By saying “yes” to this invitation, the candidate commits to the year-long formation process called IGNITE. IGNITE will foster encounters with Jesus Christ through engaging and faithful teaching, opportunities for prayer, fellowship, and service. This handbook helps those preparing for Confirmation (the Church refers to them as “candidates”), parents, and sponsors keep track of what to do, when to do it, and who should be involved in each element of formation.

# What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the Sacrament that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live a life as God's child and asks for God's Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism receives the strength to witness to God's love and might in word and deed. He/She is now a full-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic Church.

When a coach sends a soccer player onto the playing field, he puts his hand on his shoulder and gives him final instructions. We can understand Confirmation in a similar way. A hand is placed upon us. We step out onto the field of life. Through the Holy Spirit we know what we have to do and we have been given the power to do it. He has motivated us. His mission resounds in our ears. We sense his help. We will not betray his trust or disappoint him; we will win the game for him. We just have to want to do it and listen to him.

In Confirmation the soul of a baptized Christian is imprinted with a permanent seal that can be received only once and marks this individual forever as a Christian. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the strength from above in which this individual puts the grace of his Baptism into practice through his life and acts as a "witness" for Christ.

To be confirmed means to make a "covenant" with God. The confirmand says, "Yes, I believe in you, my God; give me your Holy Spirit, so that I might belong entirely to you and never be separated from you and may witness to you throughout my whole life, body and soul, in my words and deeds, on good days and bad." and God says, "Yes, I believe in you, too, my child—and I will give you my Spirit, my very self. I will belong entirely to you. I will never separate myself from you, in this life or eternally in the next. I will be in your body and your soul, in your words and deeds. Even if you forget me, I will still be there—on good days and bad."

—From the *Youcat*, §203 and §205



# The Parish's Responsibility for Formation

The Family of Parishes is responsible for inviting those seeking to seal their baptismal commitment to Christ and the Church family to accept their place within the family. God freely offers the Holy Spirit to seal and strengthen the grace received in Baptism. For a gift to be received, however, it must be accepted by the person to whom it is given.

The parish, in concert with the family and sponsor, plays an indispensable role in helping the candidate to obtain the disposition necessary for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. The Catechism notes that the "parish community...bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands" (§1309). The Code of Canon Law states that "Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate time" (Can. 890). Again, we see a partnership between parents and parish, a partnership marked by mutual discernment and fruitful instruction. The parish takes this responsibility seriously, as the pastor and/or his designated catechists have to vouch for the preparedness of the candidates to the Archbishop (or his designee) during the Rite of Confirmation by saying "each candidate has been well instructed in the significance of this sacrament for the life of Christian faith."

The Church also sets out clear expectations for Confirmation preparation. The Catechism says:

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. (CCC §1309)

Stella Maris will accomplish this preparation through our Confirmation formation program called IGNITE.



# IGNITE Formation Events & Elements

IGNITE is a one-year, youth ministry-based Confirmation formation process for 8th graders across the Stella Maris Family of Parishes. Candidates from the Family will gather once-per-month for a formation event. Events will consist of a meal, games/activities, a keynote talk, small group discussion, a brief witness talk, and prayer. Participants will each receive an IGNITE t-shirt. The program will be led by a staff member and an adult Core Team of catechists trained in youth ministry. Events (other than the NET Retreat) will run from 6-8pm at St. Thomas More. Cost of program: \$40.

- September 14, 2025 — IGNITE Kickoff Event
- October 18, 2025 — NET Retreat
  - Sponsor Form Due (see pg. 12)
- October 22, 2025 — Parent Event (7pm)
- November 9, 2025 — The Church
- December 14, 2025 — Made for Mission
  - Confirmation Names Due (see pg. 9)
- January 11, 2026 — The Holy Spirit
- February 8, 2026 — Prayer (Meeting 4-5:30pm)
  - Saint Project Due (see pg. 10)
- March 8, 2026 — Gifts of the Spirit
  - Candidate/Sponsor Conversations Due (see pg. 12)
- April 12, 2026 — The Meaning of the Rites of Confirmation
  - Letter to Pastor Due (see pg. 13)
- TBD — Rehearsal and Sacrament of Confirmation
- May 10, 2025 — Life after Confirmation

Notes: There is a Sponsor Meeting scheduled for the evening of Nov. 19, 2025. Attendance is required. Arrangements can be made for out-of-town sponsors. At the time of publication, the date for Confirmation has not been set by the Archbishop's office.

## IGNITE FORMATION ELEMENTS

IGNITE is a series of "steps to take" rather than "hoops to jump through." Formation elements should be understood in that spirit. The elements help cultivate a proper disposition for receiving the Sacrament. The elements are as follows:

- IGNITE formation events
- Sponsor and candidate journey
- Saint Project
- Letter to the pastor

IGNITE disposes candidates to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit by:

- helping them encounter and follow the person of Jesus Christ
- re-introducing them to the Holy Spirit
- cultivating a sense of belonging to the Church



# IGNITE FAQs

## **Why a Family-wide one year formation program?**

In order to best serve all of the eighth graders across the family of parishes, we wanted to unify our Confirmation formation. Teens are able to form new friendships in a welcoming, energetic and faithful atmosphere which is all made possible by bringing all of our teens together.

## **Why no service hours?**

We're certainly not discouraging service! But, we're not requiring a set number of hours to receive Confirmation. A service hour requirement can unintentionally imply that one "works for" or "earns" the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is not the case at all. The Sacraments are gifts given to those who are properly disposed to receive them. Confirmation service hours were put into place to reinforce the idea that now one is becoming an adult in the faith and must take up responsibility for serving others. This point is valid, but it does not acknowledge that one becomes a Christian in Baptism, and by definition, a Christian is one who serves. Remember, Jesus told his disciples to serve others (cf. Mt. 20:25–28). In other words, service does not start at the time of Confirmation. Service is simply what it means to be Christian.

## **Why are there expectations for candidates outside of formation events?**

While our IGNITE events are the heart of formation, each candidate should spend time outside of our monthly offerings in preparing for Confirmation. The elements we've put together are designed to help young people discern their willingness to be confirmed, enlist the help of sponsors, and grow closer to the Lord.

## **As a parent, what is my role?**

The Catechism reminds us that "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children" (CCC §2223) and that "family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith" (CCC §2226). Keep offering the formation you're already providing, and recommit to living your faith vibrantly. The best thing a parent can do: be an authentic and encouraging witness.

## **IGNITE sounds awesome. How can I help?**

Please contact the IGNITE Coordinator ([ignite@stellamarisfamily.org](mailto:ignite@stellamarisfamily.org)) if you're interested in helping as part of the Core Team of disciple-makers or as part of the Hospitality Team that will be taking care of event set up/tear down and meals.





# The Confirmation Name

For centuries, it has been a common practice for Confirmation candidates to select a "confirmation name." The purpose is twofold:

1. In Confirmation, we are undertaking a new responsibility in life—taking a "new" life, as an active, participating, responsible member of the Catholic community. We get a "new" name for this "new" life.
2. The name chosen is, by tradition, the name of a patron saint who we admire; someone whose life we will seek to model our own upon and upon whom we will rely for spiritual assistance and intercession.

Now, before we talk about choosing a name, it's worth noting that it is not necessary to select a completely "new" name. One's baptismal name can serve as a Confirmation name as well. The Catechism says some beautiful things about baptismal names. Check it out:

- In Baptism...the Christian receives his name in the Church. This can be the name of a saint, that is, of a disciple who has lived a life of exemplary fidelity to the Lord. The patron saint provides a model of charity; we are assured of his intercession. The "baptismal name" can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue. (CCC §2156)
- God calls each one by name. Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it. (CCC §2158)
- The name one receives is a name for eternity. (CCC §2159)

If a child has been given a Christian name as outlined in CCC §2156 (the first bullet above), we encourage him/her to consider taking the baptismal name as the Confirmation name. The IGNITE process will then allow the candidate to further reflect on this baptismal (and soon to be Confirmation) name.





# Selecting Your Confirmation Name

## Steps for Selecting Your Confirmation Name

- Pray: It would be good to pray about your confirmation name by asking the Holy Spirit to help you choose a confirmation name.
- Consider: Remember through this sacrament you become a fully initiated Catholic. What saint best reflects this to you? Research the lives of the saints. Learn a little about them. See <http://www.catholic.org/saints/> to find out more. Be aware of any attraction you may have to a particular saint and the reason for the attraction. Narrow your list of possibilities down to several and finally just one.
- Offer: Then present that name to God and in prayer ask Him if that is the name for you. Talk with your sponsor. As a general guideline in your discernment, follow your peace and interior feelings. God's will is always found in peace.

## Submitting Your Confirmation Name

Please submit your Confirmation name for consideration by Dec. 14, 2025.

You can do so via [this link](#) or this QR code. →



**“Being a saint means living close to God, to live in his family.  
And this is the vocation of us all.”**

— Pope Benedict XVI

# Saint Project

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Due Feb. 8, 2026

Candidates are required to complete a basic research project on the saint whose name he/she is choosing for a Confirmation name. In cases where the baptismal name is being used, assuming it is a Christian name, the candidate should research that saint or a saint that exemplifies the Christian virtue or embodies the Christian mystery signified by the name.

## Step #1: Research

Begin collecting information about your chosen saint from at least 2 reputable sources. As candidates research, they should pursue answers to the following questions:

- When and where did the saint live?
- What is his/her feast day? What is he/she the patron of and why?
- What did he or she do that was so significant or so simple?
- What do you share in common with this saint?
- How does this saint inspire you to be a true follower of Jesus Christ?
- How can you grow in your relationship with your saint through the rest of your life?

## Step #2: Action Research

The book of James, in the New Testament, reminds us that we are to be "doers of the word and not hearers only" (1:22). When it comes to the saints, all of them took action. They might have taken action in prayer, in sharing the faith, in serving others, etc. Each saint did it uniquely. How did your saint act? What did he/she do? And, what did he/she do that you can emulate?

For this part of the project, we want candidates to do something inspired by the life of their saint. For example, St. Francis took care of the poor. Could you volunteer some time at a soup kitchen? St. Thérèse devoted her life to prayer, could you devote 15 minutes a day to prayer for a week? Choose just one way to take action based on your saint, one small project, and do it. Then reflect: (1) How did this activity relate to the life of my saint? (2) What was this activity like for me? (e.g., difficult, easy, eye-opening, etc.); (3) What did I learn from it?

## Step #3: Write

Next, write everything out in a 500 word essay. Your essay should: be typed or clearly handwritten; contain your own words (does not need to be an award-winning essay, but does need to be honest and written from your own understanding); answer all the questions listed in Step #1 and Step #2; include a bibliography listing any and all sources you used.

## Step #4: Present

Each candidate will present his/her saint project on Feb. 9, 2025. You will provide background information on your saint and share, briefly, about your action research.

# Who is a sponsor?

A sponsor encourages and assists a Confirmation candidate to embrace and actively practice the Catholic faith both before and after Confirmation. Recall that a godparent for Baptism takes upon himself/herself the responsibility of helping the newly baptized person mature in living a Christian life and offers his or her own life and practice of the faith as an example of faith, prayer, and service within the Catholic Church. The sponsor for Confirmation continues that work for the candidate.

During the Rite of Confirmation, the sponsor takes on the responsibility of presenting the candidate to the bishop (or his delegate) and placing a hand on the shoulder of the candidate as the bishop (or his delegate) anoints the candidate. This is a show of support for the candidate and a gesture of prayer.

The Sacrament of Confirmation, itself, creates a strong spiritual bond between the one who is confirmed and the sponsor. After Confirmation, the sponsor should remain committed to the confirmand's life by presence and prayer. One's "yes" to be a sponsor for Confirmation is not just a "yes" to the candidate, but also a "yes" to God. In other words, taking on this obligation is a serious commitment to God.

## **When discerning a sponsor, consider the following qualities:**

- **Maturity:** The sponsor is an active, practicing Catholic, at least 16 years of age who has already celebrated the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. The sponsor should be more mature, informed, and experienced in the ways of our faith than the candidate is. However, the sponsor cannot be a parent, but assists the parents who are the primary transmitters of the faith. To emphasize the unity of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, "it is appropriate that the sponsor be one of the baptismal godparents" (CCC §1311).
- **Trustworthiness:** The sponsor is someone who already has a trusting relationship of some sort with the candidate. The sponsor is to be an honest, caring and encouraging person who will help the candidate grow in his or her understanding of the faith as the young person comes to a deeper appreciation of God in his or her life.
- **Faithfulness:** The sponsor participates weekly in Sunday or Saturday Vigil Mass and gives witness to faith in Christ Jesus by receiving Holy Communion. The sponsor believes all that the Catholic Church professes and teaches, and truly makes an effort to incorporate these teachings in his/her daily life. If married, the sponsor was married according to the laws of the Church.
- **Commitment:** The sponsor is willing to meet and share his or her faith with the candidate on a regular basis prior to the celebration of Confirmation and to make a commitment to continue the faith journey after the celebration of Confirmation. The sponsor needs to be willing to attend the sponsor meeting, rehearsal for Confirmation, and the Rite of Confirmation itself.

# Sponsor Form

Due Oct. 18, 2025

All Confirmation sponsors must complete the online Confirmation Sponsor Form. By completing this form, the sponsor acknowledges that he/she understands what is being asked of him/her and commits to follow through on these expectations.

Please note that sponsors who do not belong to one of the four Stella Maris parishes will be required to submit a letter of good standing signed by the pastor of their parish. We will contact sponsors in this situation after Oct. 18, 2025 with special instructions.

The Confirmation Sponsor Form must be completed by the sponsor by Oct. 18, 2025. The form can be accessed via [this link](#) or the QR code right here. →



## Candidate/Sponsor Conversations

Due Mar. 8, 2026

At Stella Maris, we are elevating the role of the sponsor within the Confirmation formation process. The Fuller Institute found that the best chance for faith to “stick” requires each young person to be surrounded by a team of five adults (other than his/her parents). Ideally, the sponsor is one of the five.

Sponsors are to meet with the candidate on a regular basis as part of the candidate’s journey of faith. In these meetings, a sponsor should be willing to share his/her faith with the candidate. To help our sponsors, we have composed two “Candidate/Sponsor Conversations.” It is our expectation that between Nov. 19, 2025 and Mar. 8, 2026, a sponsor will initiate at least two meaningful conversations with a candidate. Ideally, these conversations will take place in person, with the permission of the candidate’s parent(s). If meeting in person is not possible, using FaceTime, Zoom, or a simple phone call is totally acceptable.

Once the candidate and sponsor have had a conversation, they should separately record the highlights of the conversation by filling out the Google Form available via [this link](#) or this QR code. →



# LETTER TO THE PASTOR

Due April 12, 2026

Confirmation is often called “the sacrament of Christian maturity” (CCC 1308). In part, this means that all candidates are called first to receive the sacrament with a sincere “yes,” and second, to be committed to a daily and living relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church. It is important for candidates to clearly say “yes” to the spiritual father of our faith family, our pastor. The purpose of this letter is to express the desire to be confirmed and an understanding of what Confirmation means, and to ask our pastor (on behalf of the Church) to accept you as a candidate for Confirmation.



We recommend discussing the contents of this letter with your sponsor before submitting it to the church office.

## Format of the Letter

This is a formal business letter asking for full initiation into the Church. The letter should:

- be typed or clearly handwritten,
- contain your own words (does not need to be a prize-winning essay, but does need to be honest and written from your own understanding),
- be addressed to our pastor (Father Tim Ralston),
- end with a formal closing (e.g. God bless, Sincerely, Respectfully, etc.),
- include your handwritten signature (leave four spaces for this), and
- include your typed or clearly handwritten name under your signature.

## Contents of the Letter

The letter should clearly answer the following questions:

- Why do you want to receive the sacrament of Confirmation? (Be sure to state your reasons clearly. Doing so should also indicate a basic understanding of what Confirmation is.)
- How are you already living out the Christian life and how do you hope Confirmation strengthens this?
- At Confirmation, the presider will say “\_\_\_\_\_, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” That name can be a saint or your baptismal name. What name will you receive at Confirmation? Why have you chosen this name?
- What are some highlights of your journey with your sponsor?
- Formally ask the pastor to receive you as a candidate for Confirmation with these or similar words: Fr. Tim, I ask that you please receive me as a candidate for Confirmation.



# IGNITE<sup>2026</sup>

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FAMILY OF PARISHES

## Register for IGNITE

Complete the online registration form and submit the IGNITE fee (\$40) to secure your child's spot for the 2025–2026 IGNITE Formation Program.

**Deadline: May 1, 2025**

Liability and Medical Release forms will be emailed to you after May 1, 2025. These must be completed, signed, and returned to the parish office before the first IGNITE event.



[stellamarisfamily.org/ignite](https://stellamarisfamily.org/ignite)



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