



CONFIRMATION HANDBOOK

St. Mary of the Lake

2025-2026

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Large group communications will be sent to parents via a Flocknote email list. Parents will be added and can change their subscription preferences here: <https://tinyurl.com/k2jyy8e8>.



Welcome Letter

Dear Confirmation Candidates, Parents, and Sponsors,

Hello and welcome to the exciting process that is preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation! We are so glad you are here. I am Michelle Boris, the Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries here at St. Mary of the Lake, and I am thrilled to be on this journey of faith with you and your family. Through the graces received in the sacrament, we can more fully enter into the call to serve God and the Church in new and deeply personal ways.

Confirmation is a theologically rich and life-changing sacrament, and the Church asks candidates to participate in education and growth to be properly formed and ready for the commitment they are preparing to make to God. The sacrament of Confirmation is not a graduation, but an opportunity to explore our Catholic faith as a fully initiated member of the Church. I want to emphasize that this is not simply a checklist or transaction; through this process, you get to enter into an actual encounter with the living person of the Holy Spirit. Young people, we want to answer the questions you are asking, help you understand the meaning of the sacrament that you are going to receive, and help you to be open to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

In John 10:10, Jesus says, “I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” Throughout this preparation process, you will be offered this choice. You get the opportunity to explore who God is and why a relationship with Him matters, what it means for your life, and how the Sacrament of Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ. In Confirmation, you will receive the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to become disciples equipped with grace to go out and change the world.

To do this, preparation will look a little different this year. During each session, candidates will have small group times where they’ll journey through series from Alpha Youth and YDisciple to answer the big questions about the Catholic faith and our call to discipleship we received in Baptism that is strengthened in Confirmation. Candidates, during these discussion times, you are encouraged to ask questions, explore your faith, form connections with your peers and adult mentors, and ultimately, deepen your relationship with Christ.

As we explore these topics and what they mean, we hope that parents and sponsors can dive into these with us as well. You are welcome to join us for our Tuesday sessions, and we will be sending home weekly resources to explore these topics further with your candidate. Parents, as the primary formators of your child’s faith, your candidate needs you to model what an adult faith looks like. We pray that you enter fully into this process as a family, and that through this process you can all grow closer to each other and the God who loves you deeply.

We will be hosting a meeting on Tuesday, October 21st for all registered candidates, parents, and sponsors (if selected) to go through all the details of the Confirmation preparation process. If you have any questions before then, please do not hesitate to reach out. Know that I am here as a resource for you and your families and we look forward to growing in faith alongside you this year.

God bless,

Michelle Boris
Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries
mboris@stmarys-wbl.org

Why Confirmation? What Is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Why are we here? Why does the Church ask us to participate in education and growth of faith before we receive the sacrament of Confirmation? Why do we receive this sacrament at all?

The Church asks us to participate in education and growth of faith because of the gravity of the commitment we are preparing to make to God.

When you are confirmed, the Bishop will anoint you by tracing the sign of the cross on your forehead with holy chrism, which is blessed olive oil mixed with balsam. The candidates were anointed with chrism first during their Baptism, when they became a new creation in Christ Jesus, and now at Confirmation, as they receive the Holy Spirit and their mission in the Church. The anointing with chrism is an outward sign of a real spiritual *seal* or mark imparted by God- a mark that will never be taken away.

To be confirmed means to make a “covenant”[an exchange of persons] 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.”

- Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (YouCat), §205

In this covenant, we are given **the gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Courage, Knowledge, Piety and Wonder & Awe.**

The Church also speaks of the Fruits of the Spirit. These are the good things that result when we allow ourselves to be deeply guided by the Holy Spirit.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Chastity and Self-Control.

Areas of Readiness

The purpose of the preparation program for the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation is to assure the readiness of the candidate. Although it is tempting to determine the readiness of a candidate for the sacrament of Confirmation by simply basing that readiness on age, or grade, or other quantifiable criteria, there are many factors that need to be included in this assessment. St. Mary's asks students to show their readiness to receive the sacrament of Confirmation through the areas described below.

Mass

"It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass."

~ St. Pio of Pietrelcina

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. We receive the grace to follow Christ, believe in him, and have life in Him through the Eucharist. It is necessary for disciples. We must receive Him and receive Him often! Attending Sunday Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation is the Third Commandment and is required for all Catholics, as is receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year. **Confirmation candidates are expected to be attending Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation.**

Preparation Sessions

Preparation sessions will be from 6:00-7:30 PM in Kohler Hall in the PLC.

There will be an optional social/snack time (typically with an open gym) from 5:30-6:00 PM. Parents are invited to stay to enjoy hospitality and fellowship with other parents. Please see Confirmation Calendar in the final section.

Candidates will meet in small groups of about 8-10 students to cover the topics listed on the calendar. Every night will begin with large group content in Kohler Hall; candidates will sit at an assigned table with their small group for this time. They will have the opportunity to discuss content taught to the large group at their table. Small groups will be led by confirmed Catholics teens and adults.

Attendance Policy: Confirmation students are asked to attend at least 80% of sessions. If a candidate misses more than these three sessions, they will be asked to complete at-home makeup with their parents and write a brief reflection. Parents and candidates are encouraged to view and discuss all materials for any session they miss.

Faith Exploration

The Church has deep and rich traditions that can apply to a variety of people in a variety of stages of life. We will spend time in Confirmation exploring the different faith opportunities that the Church has to offer.

Students will need to complete 3 of the 10 areas of exploration each year. At least ONE of these should be done with the candidate's sponsor:

1. Consistent Parish Volunteering or Service (i.e. Children's Liturgy of the Word, Nursery)*
2. Serve regularly at Masses (Choir Member, Greeter, Altar Server, Projectionist, Usher, etc.)*
3. Attend a Daily Mass
4. Attend a Friday Stations of the Cross during Lent
5. Attend a special, non-Holy Day of Obligation Mass (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, etc.)
6. Attend a Youth Ministry event (Wednesday BLAST, Next Level Monthly Gathering)
7. Spend an hour in Eucharistic adoration
8. Faith Based Club at school (i.e. Fellowship of Christian Athletes)
9. Archdiocese/National Catholic Youth Event (i.e. Lifeline mass)
10. Faith Enrichment: Learn more about your faith by watching a youth series, reading a book, or listening to a podcast from Formed.org or another approved source. *Your resource for this must be approved by the Confirmation Coordinator ahead of time. Please reach out for a list of general, age-appropriate suggestions or if you would like your resource on a specific topic approved. *

Consult Confirmation Coordinator for details on how to sign up for parish and liturgical ministries.

Other options can be presented to Confirmation Coordinator to be approved

Candidates will complete a brief online reflection form after each Faith Exploration Opportunity they complete. **Faith exploration activities should be completed no later than March 24, 2026, and reflections should be submitted by that date.**

Hands From Home Service

"It is not enough to experience God's mercy in one's life; whoever receives it must also become a sign and instrument for others...In a world which, unfortunately, has been damaged by the virus of indifference, the works of mercy are the best antidote....The works of mercy reawaken in us the need, and the ability, to make the faith alive and active with charity."

-Pope Francis's General Audience in St. Peter's Square on Wednesday, October 12, 2016

Service is a response to one's life of faith and is a part of Confirmation preparation because it is part of the Christian life in general. Candidates and their families will serve others through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, using the suggestions on our Hands from Home list available online. **Sponsors should participate in at least one of these works of mercy with their candidate.**

Each candidate will select three spiritual works of mercy and three corporal works of mercy and do one tangible service project to live that work of mercy out. Follow the steps below for each work of mercy:

1. With your family (and sponsor if you can include them), select which work of mercy you are going to focus on that day and the specific action you are going to take to complete it.
2. Using the Family Resource Guide, go through the steps of the "Family Group Preparation" and any additional information that may be helpful.
3. Begin by watching the video for that work of mercy, which includes an opening prayer and a reflection on the life of a saint who lived it out.
4. Complete the service opportunity itself.
5. Use the Theological Reflection Guide to process and discuss as a family after you finish your service.
6. Candidates, complete the Hands from Home log. Each candidate should submit this for every different work of mercy they complete as a family, so by the end candidates will have submitted the form six times. You are always welcome to do more service and submit the form even more times!

Each Confirmation candidate and their family should complete THREE corporal works of mercy and THREE spiritual works of mercy by April 1, 2026. We suggest you do one a month to stay on track.

Retreat

Candidates will participate in a fun and unforgettable day-long, on campus retreat on **Sunday, December 7, 2025 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM.** This retreat will serve to introduce candidates to the Holy Spirit, what He can do in our lives, how we experience the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit. The end of the retreat gives an opportunity to encounter the Holy Spirit. There will be time for young people to also build community amongst their Confirmation cohort.

The retreat will begin with the parish Mass at 9:00 AM. Candidates may sit with their families or their small group leaders. After Mass, candidates should meet in the Gathering Space to walk to the Parish Life Center as a group. Lunch and snacks will be provided. The retreat will end at 4:00 PM in Kohler Hall.

A makeup will be required for candidates who do not attend this retreat; please contact the Confirmation Coordinator for details.

Sponsor

Confirmation candidates are asked to choose a **sponsor** to walk with and pray for the candidate throughout their preparation and beyond. A qualified sponsor is a Confirmed, active and practicing Catholic who lives a life of Catholic values Sunday Mass, Regular Confession, growing in their faith). He or she can't be a candidate's parent, has to be confirmed, and must be at least 16 years old. This is required for the candidate to be confirmed.

The sponsor willingly participates in the Candidate's preparation process by being a person who exemplifies in faith and action a life that the Confirmand can follow as an example of one on the journey toward a closer relationship with the Lord; participating in the liturgies, attending sessions with the Confirmand whenever possible and encouraging the young candidate to a Christian life during and after the preparation process. See "The Role of the Sponsor" in the next section for more details.

The Sponsor information form is due by November 30, 2025.

Confirmation Interview

All candidates will have a 5-10 minute interview with the Confirmation Coordinator, small group leaders, and/or other staff and parishioners working with the Confirmation program. During these interviews, students will be asked why they want to be Confirmed, why they are choosing to be Catholic, and what they like about the Catholic faith. Students are encouraged to have the same conversation with their parents and sponsors prior to the interview with Church.

Confirmation interview details and times will be announced in the Spring. Sign-ups are required. The link will be sent out via email.

Baptismal Certificate

Before anyone can be confirmed the parish must have proof of baptism. Students who were baptized at St. Mary's or completed a Profession of Faith at St. Mary's are asked to indicate that on their registration form.

If you were not baptized at St. Mary's, we will need a new copy of your baptismal certificate issued from the Church of Baptism. This has to be completed for each sacrament received outside of the Church of Baptism. Parents or candidates will need to contact the Church of Baptism for a copy to be sent to St. Mary's. Please instruct the sending parish to mail the certificate to:

St. Mary of the Lake
Attn: Confirmation Coordinator
4690 Bald Eagle Ave
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Baptism certificates or date of St. Mary's baptism must be received by January 30, 2026.

Confirmation Saint

Confirmation candidates are asked to pick a patron Saint whose life has inspired them in some way. Students are encouraged to pray for the Saint to intercede for them throughout the process of Confirmation and throughout their life. Not only will candidates ask this saint to pray for them, but this provides candidates with a new name. This name serves as a reminder that the candidate had been baptized in the Catholic Church and was given a name.

The patron saint can be someone whom the candidate desires to be like, or it can even be his or her baptismal name, as long as it helps the candidate to remember the commitments made during the sacrament. It is important to do some research, then take time to discern through prayer on which saint you are being called to choose (or which saint is choosing you).

Candidates will be provided with a template document to create a poster about their saint which includes prompts on sharing information about the saint's life and why they chose him or her. The poster can either be completed digitally or printed and handwritten. Details and templates will be shared during Confirmation preparation sessions before Christmas.

Saint posters are due by January 30, 2026.

The Role of the Sponsor

The sponsor leads and inspires the one confirmed to faithfully live as a true witness to Christ and the Gospel. The presence of a sponsor at confirmation is a "very ancient custom of the Church."

According to the Code of Canon Law, the requirements or prerequisites for a person to serve as a sponsor at confirmation are the same as those for sponsors at baptism. ...it is desirable that the sponsor at baptism should sponsor the person when confirmed. This...more clearly expresses the link between baptism and confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective.

Requirements for Sponsors (*Canon 874*)

1. A Sponsor must be a Confirmed & practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
2. A Sponsor must be at least 16 years old.
3. He or she cannot be the Candidate's mother or father.

Roles and Expectations of the Sponsor

The sponsor willingly participates in the Candidate's preparation process by being a person who exemplifies in faith and action a life that the Confirmand can follow as an example of one on the journey toward a closer relationship with the Lord; participating in the liturgies, attending sessions with the Confirmand whenever possible and encouraging the young candidate to a Christian life during and after the preparation process.

1. The Sponsor should be a person who is prayerful, open, dependable, loving and is comfortable sharing his or her faith with young people.
2. The Sponsor should meet with the Candidate regularly throughout the preparation process. These meetings should include discussions about different topics, such as:
 - * share your faith story
 - * share their faith story
 - * ask them about topics presented at faith formation nights
 - * ask them about problems or concerns they might be having
 - * talk about a day at school
 - * talk about life issues
3. Spend time getting to know the Candidate—possibly taking him or her out to lunch or dinner or having them over to your home.
4. Most important—PRAY for and with your Candidate!
 - * Go to Adoration together
 - * Pray the Rosary
 - * Attend Reconciliation together
 - * Read from the Bible

Sponsors are expected to complete the following:

1. **Certificate of Eligibility** – Signed by sponsor and the home parish pastor.
2. Complete at least **ONE Faith Exploration** with their candidate throughout the year.
3. Complete at least **TWO Hands from Home** service opportunities with the candidate and their family.
4. **Attend the Sponsor Formation session** in person or virtually.
5. **Attend the Confirmation Ceremony** with the candidate on April 13, 2026.
6. Encouraged: Attend parent/candidate information meetings. Sponsors are welcome to attend preparation sessions.

All candidates must have a sponsor chosen by November 30th, 2025.

Confirmation Schedule

Topics and dates are subject to change. Bolded dates and times are sessions held at irregular times. All other sessions are held from: 6:00-7:30 PM in Kohler Hall in the Parish Life Center, with optional social/snack/open gym time from 5:30-6:00 PM. *Parents are invited to stay to enjoy hospitality and fellowship with each other.*

Date	Event	Time	Details
October 21	Candidate, Parent & Sponsor Meeting	6:00-7:00 PM	Confirmation Expectations & Packet Overview Parents attend with candidates. <i>Sponsors are encouraged to attend if selected/local.</i>
October 25 OR October 26	Rite of Enrollment	5:00 PM (Oct. 25) 9:00 AM or Preferred: 11:00 AM	Rite of Enrollment at Mass (choose one; <u>please arrive 15 minutes early to check in. Everyone encouraged to attend 11:00 AM if possible.</u>)
October 28	Session 1	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 1: Welcome to the Conversation
November 4	Session 2	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 2: Jesus Is...?
November 11	Session 3	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 3: What Does Love Look Like?
November 18	Session 4	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 4: Why Would I Want A Relationship with God
November 25: Thanksgiving Break			
December 2	Session 5	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 5: What Does a Relationship with God Look Like?
December 7	Retreat Day	Start- 9:00 AM- Mass (Church) End- 4:00 PM (Kohler Hall)	Alpha Youth Session 6: Who Is the Holy Spirit? & 7: How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
December 9	Session 6	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 8: How Does God Help Us Overcome Evil
December 16, 2025 - January 6, 2026: Christmas Break			
January 13	Session 7	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 9: Does God Heal Today?
January 20	Session 8	6:00-7:30 PM	Alpha Youth Session 10: What Happens Next
January 27	Session 9	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Never Alone - Session 1: Belonging
February 3	Session 10	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Never Alone - Session 2: Guided
February 10	Session 11	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Never Alone - Session 3: Empowered
February 17	Session 12	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Never Alone - Session 4: Alive
February 24	Session 13	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Confirmation Bible Study Session 1: The Basics
March 3	Session 14	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Confirmation Bible Study Session 2: The Gifts
March 10 – Spring Break			
March 17	Session 15	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Confirmation Bible Study Session 3: The Proof
March 24	Session 16	6:00-7:30 PM	YDisciple - Confirmation Bible Study Session 4: The Mission
March 31 – Holy Week – No Session			
April 7	Ceremony Preparation Meeting	6:00-7:00 PM	Ceremony Prep Details. Parents and sponsors should attend with candidates.
April 12	Rite of Sending	11:00 AM Mass	
April 13	Confirmation Ceremony	7:00 PM	At the Cathedral of St. Paul; Arrive by 6:30 PM
TBD	Sponsor Formation	TBD	For sponsors only; will have virtual option

