



Saint James Parish Confirmation Preparation and Interview Questions

Dear Candidate,

Soon you will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. It is a sacrament that you have been preparing for all your life. From the time you were baptized, you have been growing in faith as you discovered the many mysteries, miracles and gifts that God gives us as members of His body, the church. Now you are in the home stretch!

In Confirmation, the gifts of the Holy Spirit which you received in baptism will be strengthened, and you will receive additional gifts that will help you live your life as a true witness to Christ. You will be more closely bound to the church and more deeply united to Christ. This is an important step in your faith journey. Through the sacrament of Confirmation, you will be indelibly marked for Christ and be able to spread and defend your faith in word and in action. This is what the Holy Spirit calls each of us to do.

According to the National Directory for Catechesis and the Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton, there are specific guidelines regarding preparation and readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. (Sacramental Guidelines, Diocese of Trenton, 2016)

These guidelines include:

- A personal love for Jesus Christ and the Church He founded
- A knowledge of the Faith consistent with candidate's age, maturity and intellectual abilities
- Knowledge of the Liturgy and Sacraments emphasizing regular participation in both
- Understanding of Pentecost
- Understanding the theology of Confirmation, as well as the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- Moral formation in Jesus Christ
- Understanding of the importance of prayer
- Be prepared to actively participate in the life and mission of the church

The following document is designed as a tool to help you pull together some of the most important teachings of our faith and strengthen your understanding of Confirmation. We will be talking in small groups prior to your Confirmation. The information in this study guide is a refresher of what you already know, so review the information, say a prayer, and relax! The Holy Spirit is with you!!

God Bless,

Mrs. Fiorenza

What You Need to Know

Please study this information prior to your Confirmation interview. If you have any questions about the information listed, please don't hesitate to ask your teacher. Do not stress about this. Rather, review the information and be prepared to talk about it. Most importantly, be proud of your faith, and all that you have learned about the sacrament that you will receive in the spring! God Bless You!

Section 1: Sacraments and Confirmation

What is a sacrament?

It is an outward sign, created by Christ, to give us grace.

What is grace?

Grace is a gift which God freely gives, that allows and encourages us to respond to Him and His call to become children of God and partakers of eternal life in His presence.

What are the seven sacraments?

- Baptism
- Reconciliation
- Holy Eucharist
- Confirmation
- Matrimony
- Holy Orders
- Anointing of the Sick

Which are the sacraments of initiation and what is their purpose?

- *Baptism:* To free us from original sin, and bring us into the family of God
- *Holy Eucharist:* Gives us the grace necessary to sustain us for the journey to eternal life
- *Confirmation:* We are strengthened to spread and defend the faith.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the Lord and the Giver of Life. He is also known as the Advocate and the Paraclete.

What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament that completes baptism and strengthens us with the Holy Spirit to make us witnesses and defenders of Jesus Christ and His church.

What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Wisdom: The gift of Wisdom gives us the ability to put God first, recognize the sacredness of all people, and the real value of things.

Understanding: The gift of Understanding gives us the ability to grasp the truths of our faith and be certain about our beliefs.

Counsel: This gift helps us to make good decisions, accept our responsibility, to seek good advice and to give good advice.

Fortitude: This gift of the Holy Spirit gives us the inner strength to do what is right in the face of difficulty.

Knowledge: This gift helps us to know God's plan for us and live according to Jesus's message.

Piety: This gift of the Spirit helps us to love and worship God, not because we have to, but because we want to.

Fear of the Lord: This gift of the Holy Spirit helps us understand God's Greatness and not offend Him.

How are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit different from the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit are freely given to us by God. If we use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to direct us, then we will live out the fruits of the Holy Spirit for others to experience.

What are the effects of Confirmation on those who receive this sacrament?

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* through Confirmation the baptized (you) are:

1. More perfectly bound to the Church
2. Given a special strength of the Holy Spirit to *spread and defend the faith by word and deed* (CCC 1285).
3. Increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Baptism
4. Roots us more deeply as sons and daughters of God.

Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, and what is the essential sign/rite of this sacrament?

The ordinary minister of the sacrament of Confirmation is the bishop, although a priest may be delegated by the bishop to confirm (CCC 1312-14).

The essential sign of Confirmation is anointing with Sacred Chrism (sacred oil) on the forehead of the candidate by minister of the sacrament who pronounces the words, "*Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit*". The candidate replies, "*Amen.*" (CCC 1320).

How many times can someone receive the sacrament of Confirmation?

Like the sacraments of Baptism, and Holy Orders, Confirmation can only be received once.

What is Pentecost, and how is it related to Confirmation?

Pentecost means 50. On the first Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles were gathered in the Upper Room, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Tongues of fire rested on them, and they were given the power and courage to go out and proclaim the Gospel.

Pentecost is related to Confirmation because like the Apostles, in Confirmation we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit to spread and defend our faith.

Section 2: Important Teachings of our Faith and our Church

Who founded the Catholic Church?

Jesus Christ

What is the Holy Trinity?

The Holy Trinity is a central mystery of our faith: There are THREE PERSONS (The Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in ONE GOD.

What are the four Gospels and what do they contain?

The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Gospels contain events in the life of Jesus and his teachings. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: What is written in the Gospels was set down there “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” *Jn 20:31*. (CCC 514)

What is prayer? Why is it important? What is your favorite Prayer?

Prayer is a conversation with God. It can be personal and spontaneous, or it can be a prayer given to us by the church such as the Hail Mary. Prayer can be vocal, or contemplative. The highest form of prayer is the Holy Mass. Prayer is vital to the life of every Christian; as essential as breathing or eating. It is important because it strengthens our bond with God allowing us to thank Him, praise Him, ask for forgiveness, and make petition.

Who was the first Pope?

The first Pope was Saint Peter. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Jesus told him, “You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

What is Apostolic Succession?

Through the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Jesus entrusted to the Apostles his power of sanctification. By the power of that same Holy Spirit, the Apostles entrusted this power to their successors. This “apostolic succession” continues to be handed on through the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC 1087).

What are the 10 Commandments?

- I. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.
- II. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- III. Keep holy the sabbath
- IV. Honor your father and your mother
- V. You shall not kill
- VI. You shall commit adultery
- VII. You shall not steal
- VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
- IX. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife
- X. You shall not covet your neighbors’ goods.

What is the Great Commandment?

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus gave the Great Commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. He then gave the second commandment; love your neighbor as yourself. In these two commandments, Jesus summed up the 10 Commandments, because the first three apply to our relationship with God, while the seven that follow apply to our relationship with other people.

What is sin?

Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed or omission against God's law.

What makes a sin mortal (one which causes us to lose sanctifying grace)?

Three requirements for a sin to be a mortal sin:

1. It must be a serious sin (grave matter)
2. You must know it is a serious sin (sufficient knowledge)
3. You must freely choose to commit it anyway (full consent of the will)

All three conditions must be present for a person to be guilty of mortal sin. (CCC 1855-59)

What is the purpose of the sacrament of Reconciliation?

The sacrament of Reconciliation allows someone who has committed mortal sin to be restored to a state of grace by being sorry for his/her sins, making a good confession to a priest and receiving absolution from him. When one does this, all his/her sins are forgiven by God's infinite mercy. (cf. CCC 1468, 1472, 1496)

What are the six precepts (Rules) of the church?

You shall participate at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day

You shall confess your sins at least once a year

You shall receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season

You shall fast and abstain on the appointed days

{Abstinence and fasting days: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday}

{Abstinence days: All Fridays during Lent}

{All persons 14 and over must abstain; All persons 18-59 must observe laws of both fast and abstinence}

You shall support the church (by giving of your time, or by giving financial support)

You shall observe the laws of marriage

What do Catholics believe about the Holy Eucharist? What is the tabernacle?

- In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus is truly present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Eucharist is NOT a symbol of Christ. At every Mass, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit. And through the power of the Holy Spirit, the miracle of transubstantiation takes place. Although the bread and wine still retain their appearance, the substance of the bread and wine has become Jesus Christ himself.
- The tabernacle is the liturgical furnishing where consecrated Eucharist can be stored outside of the Mass. It also helps prevent profanation of the Eucharist. Therefore, church law requires that the tabernacle be immovable, made of solid material and locked. (CCC 938)

Section 3: Questions about your Confirmation Journey

Why did you pick your Confirmation saint? In what ways does your saint inspire your life?

Tell me about your service hours. Why did you choose this service? Do you think you will continue?

If a non-Catholic friend asked you why you would like to be Confirmed, what would you tell them?

How do you think your life will be changed by receiving the sacrament of Confirmation?

After you are confirmed, how will you spread and defend your faith?

What is something you like about being Catholic?

Who is the most influential person in your life regarding your faith? How has this person influenced you?