

ST AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION HANDBOOK

SEVENTH GRADE 2022-2023





ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. AGNES PARISH

REV. WILLIAM P. SAUNDERS
Pastor

REV. ANDREW HAISSIG
Parochial Vicar

REV. ANTHONY PINIZZOTTO
Priest in Residence

REV. STEVEN OETJEN
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Religious Education Office: 703.527.1129

MISSION STATEMENT

Called by our Lord Jesus Christ, and strengthened by His Word and Sacraments, we strive to be faithful missionary disciples in Jesus Christ, sharing His love with one another and all in need.

CORE VALUES

Communion: Uniting ourselves with Jesus and other baptized Christians in the Church, which has its source and summit in the Eucharist.

Holiness: Embracing the "light, love and limitless possibility" communicated by the Holy Spirit and consecrating ourselves to doing God's will by uniting ourselves to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Joy: Delighting in the peace that comes from knowing God's love and manifesting His love to others in the hope of sharing in His glory.

Service: Promoting the dignity of the human person by sharing our God-given time, talent and treasure with others.

Discipleship: Recognizing that conversion is a gradual and lifelong process, we commit to fostering a deeper relationship with God, living a fully sacramental life, sustaining our faith through ongoing catechesis and witnessing to the love of God through Jesus in our words, actions and relationships, and passing this on to our children.

Dear St. Agnes Confirmation Students,

Welcome to our Confirmation Program at St. Agnes. Confirmation at St. Agnes is a two year preparation where students begin preparation in the 7th Grade and are confirmed in the Spring of their 8th Grade.

At Baptism, we are born spiritually. We become sharers in the divine life of the most Blessed Trinity. For most of us, our parents asked for the gift of Baptism on our behalf when we were infants. The Holy Spirit infused our soul with the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, counsel and fear of the Lord. These gifts, along with a life of grace, formation and prayer helped us grow in love and deeper faith with Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Confirmation is the Sacrament that signals a maturation in grace in the spiritual life of a Christian. As Confirmation candidates near adulthood, they give their free will assent to membership and service to the Church. With the increased outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they are empowered to serve the Church and take on the mission of Christ to make disciples of all nations. **It is the beginning of a lifetime journey of intentional discipleship.**

In the 7th Grade, you will begin your preparation for Confirmation by learning more about the Faith, reflecting on the Sunday Gospels, and discovering that you can contribute meaningfully to the Church and society through the generous sharing of your gifts.

Saint Agnes aims to accompany and encourage our students and families by forming the whole person:

- **MIND:** Through faithful and thorough catechesis in class, students will learn the timeless teachings of Jesus through the Church. Through stimulating discussions, students learn how to defend their Faith and become true soldiers of Christ.
- **HEART:** Through prayers, holy hour, devotions, and retreats students will be given opportunities to open their hearts and enter a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.
- **SOUL:** Through frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance, faithful attendance of Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation, and reflection on the Gospel readings, students will be nourished spiritually and come to a more mature faith.
- **STRENGTH:** Through the generous sharing of their gifts with the less fortunate, students will learn how to live out their faith in concrete ways.

Of course, this journey cannot be taken alone. Your parents promised at your Baptism to teach you and be role models in the Faith. St. Agnes is ready to support your parents in their baptismal promise and help you become all that God created you to be.

Blessings,

Lisa Orosa
Director of Faith Formation
confirmation@saintagnes.org
703.527.1129



OUR MISSION & VISION

At St. Agnes, we believe in the inherent dignity of every person, created out of love and for love, in the image and likeness of God.

The goal of St. Agnes Religious Education is to provide opportunities for students and families to have a profound encounter with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the Sunday liturgies, the Sacraments, the Word of God and joyful service to become intentional disciples and ambassadors for Christ.

By living a grace-filled life, nourished by prayer, strengthened by the Sacraments, and transformed by the Word of God, our students and families are empowered to grow in the Faith, deepen their relationship with God, and live out their mission to be the loving and courageous presence of Jesus Christ in a world in need of hope.

*"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."
- St . Catherine of Siena*

CONFIRMATION AT ST. AGNES

7TH GRADE REQUIREMENTS

PARENT & STUDENT RETREAT

The student and at least one parent are required to attend a mandatory retreat. The retreat will set the tone and help participants reflect on God's purpose for their lives as they prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. SAVE THE DATE: November 5, 2022



FORMS

Baptismal Certificate, Confirmation Application Form, Student & Parent Preparation forms are required for 7th Grade Confirmation. See parish website for forms and details. DUE DATE: October 21, 2022

FLIPGRID GOSPEL REFLECTIONS

Students are expected to attend Sunday Mass. They should know the importance of faithful attendance of Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation. *The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith because it is Jesus Himself who feeds us with His own flesh and blood.* Without the Eucharist, we become severely malnourished spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally. We cannot grow as His disciple nor fulfill the mission God has planned for us. However, mere physical presence at Mass is

not enough for the confirmed Catholic. The Mass also nourishes us with the Word of God. *Flipgrid Gospel Reflections aim to help us listen more attentively to God speaking to us and see how we can best live this out in our daily lives.* Students are expected to reflect thoughtfully on the Gospel and answer the questions fully each week beginning October 16, 2022. Students may opt for a written submission of the weekly reflections at the end of the month, in lieu of video submissions.

LETTER OF INTENT

Students are required to write a handwritten one-page letter to Fr. Saunders, telling him why they want to be confirmed. *The letter must be sincere, neatly written, in proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.* Stationary or plain white paper may be used. DUE DATE: March 31, 2022



SERVICE AS A RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

Service to the poor, the needy and the Church is a response to God's love who calls us to serve Him, hidden in the faces of the poor. Students are expected to serve 10 pre-approved hours and submit an A/V presentation and reflection. DUE DATE: May 11, 2023



KEY DATES

7th Grade Retreat: November 5, 2022
Letter of Intent: March 31, 2023
Service A/V Project: May 11, 2023

FLIPGRID GOSPEL REFLECTIONS

*"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work."
(2Timothy 3:16-17)*

*"Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart."
(Hebrews 4:12)*

As students prepare to be confirmed in the Catholic Faith, it is important that they not only attend Mass regularly and on holy days of obligation, but also immerse themselves in the Word of God, reflecting on its message and living it out in their daily lives. St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin in the first century, famously said, "Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." In addition to St. Jerome's reason, here are a few benefits of reading and reflecting on the Liturgical Readings, taken from Sacred Scriptures:

- **The Bible is God speaking to us.** It is the living Word of God. It has no equal, and it is as relevant today as it was when Jerome labored over its translation. Further, the Word of God is Christ: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (Jn. 1:1) Thus, every encounter with Scripture is an encounter with Christ.
- **Sacred Scripture is filled with encouragement.** It is very easy, in the midst of our sloppy, busy, stress-filled days, to lose touch with who we are: God's children. Taking time to read Scripture every day keeps us grounded, reminds us of who we are. Reading Scripture helps us to recall, every day, that Christ is with us – even in the sloppiness, the busy-ness, the stress.
- **Reading Scripture helps us to pray better.** Every one of us needs to pray better. Prayer is our lifeline to God. Scripture can help us to pray better. We see ourselves reflected in the sorrow, pain and faithfulness of Job. We understand Jonah's reluctance to do the job God has set before him. We rejoice, laugh, cry and challenge God with the psalmist. We understand the shame of the woman about to be stoned. We tremble with fear, abandoning Christ, just as most of the Apostles did when He most needed them. To enter into God's word helps us to see, hear, feel and understand basic human responses ... and then do better. We rise above our fears, our sorrows, our shame, because we know God is with us. Always. He never abandons us. Scripture is the story of God's eternal love and faithfulness.
- **Reading Scripture will help us become better evangelists and soldiers of Christ.** As soldiers of Christ, the Confirmandi share in the mission of Christ to spread the Good News of God to others. Reading Sacred Scripture can help our faith mature. Many Catholics stop studying their faith when they leave school. This epidemic leaves our adult believers with a stunted faith. Confronted by difficult questions from non-Catholics, all too often we offer weak or uncertain defenses of our faith. Not every Catholic has to become a seminary professor, but every Catholic can benefit from grappling with serious questions of faith, grounded in the study of the Scriptures.

Each Sunday and holy days of obligation, students will be asked to reflect on the Liturgical Readings and to answer 2-3 questions. The questions and link to the Gospel Readings can be accessed via Flipgrid. Students may choose to record their answers via Flipgrid. Alternatively, students may submit their written reflections via email to confirmation@saintagnes.org. Instructions on how to access Flipgrid will be emailed to families separately.

Flipgrid Gospel reflections begin on October 16, 2022 and end on April 30, 2023.

SERVICE AS A RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

*"Faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone may say, "You have faith and I have works."
Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works."
(James 2:17-18)*

Acts of service is a response to God's love and an opportunity to reflect God's love to others. It is an integral expression of one's faith in a compassionate and Providential God and a demonstration of one's desire to follow Jesus who says, "Love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34)

Everyone has the capacity and the talent to joyfully contribute for the good of the parish and the community. Even young children discover the joy of giving and making a difference in someone's life when given the opportunity and in following the example of parents. The gift of serving others is a great antidote to the self-centered culture that pervades our children's lives.

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation students are expected to serve a minimum total of 10 volunteer service hours in either the parish or serving the poor or the needy. **Students must submit a Service Proposal for preapproval PRIOR to undertaking a volunteer activity.** A final audio-visual reflection in the form of a slide show or a video that highlights the student's service activities will be due on May 5, 2023.

CORPORAL & SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

WORKS OF MERCY	Suggested Activities
Feed the hungry/Give drink to the thirsty	Participate in a meal packing event. Work in a Soup Kitchen with Mom or Dad. Bake cookies for Christ House. Make dinner for a needy family. Volunteer for a St. Agnes Church social event.
Clothe the naked	Participate in a coat drive for Catholic Charities. Do a clothing drive. Volunteer at a non-profit clothing store.
Visit the sick	Visit a nursing home. Offer your service without pay to an elderly neighbor to mow, shovel snow, rake leaves, weed, etc. Help out a sick person in your neighborhood. Make care packages for pregnant moms or people in the hospital.
Shelter the homeless	Participate in a blanket drive or a walk for the homeless. Collect toiletries for Christ House. Help build a ramp or install safety equipment in the homes of the elderly or the disabled. Help refugees or immigrants settling in the country.
Visit the imprisoned	Collect books to donate to a jail library. Help with organizations that serve the families and children of those incarcerated.
Bury the dead	Participate in Wreaths Across America. Assist at a bereavement luncheon.
Instruct the ignorant/ Counsel the doubtful	Assist with a CCD class or at events for First Holy Communion or Confirmation. Help out with Vacation Bible School.
Comfort the sorrowful	Make cards for people in the St. Agnes prayer list. Write encouraging notes and care packages for soldiers on the field.
Admonish sinners/Bear wrongs patiently/ Forgive all injuries/Pray for the Living & the Dead	Sign-up for an hour or more of adoration at the Adoration Chapel of St. Agnes. Offer the hour for the conversion of sinners, the forgiveness of those who offended us, for those who have died and for those who have asked for our prayers. Serve as an altar server, a lector or in the choir during Mass.

SERVICE AS A RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

STEPS TO THE SERVICE PROJECT

1. Identify a need in the Church or in the community.
2. Assess your talents & skill sets
3. Identify an organization to work with. Do some research.
4. Determine how you can help.
5. Discuss with parents if the projects are feasible. Come up with a timeline & resource list.
6. Write up and submit a Service Proposal and have parents sign. Submit to **confirmation@saintagnes.org** for pre-approval.
7. Once approved, do your act of service and ask someone to take pictures/videos. **Your Service presentation MUST INCLUDE PHOTOS/VIDEOS OF THE STUDENT SERVING.**
8. Keep track of the number of hours you served. Bring service log to help you determine the number of hours you've accumulated so far. There is no need to submit the service log to the RE Office. This is for your own tracking.
9. Compile your photos/videos in a slide show.
 - For VIDEOS, it must be between 2-5 minutes long.
 - For SLIDE SHOWS, it must be between 6-10 slides long.
 - Students may choose to focus on ONE activity or showcase a variety. *The photos/videos must clearly show the student doing the actual activity.*
 - The AV presentation must include a reflection that answers the following:
 - What I did
 - What organization did I help and why I chose this
 - What I learned about myself, others and God
 - How was my service a response to God's love and how I was able to reflect God's love to others

DUE DATE: May 11, 2023

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Service activities & organizations may NOT be political in nature or advocate causes that are contrary to Catholic Beliefs.
- Service activities must directly and foremost benefit either the Church or the poor and needy people of the community.
- Service activities that do not directly help the Church or the poor and needy are not acceptable. *For example, helping at a pet shelter will NOT count BUT helping at an organization that trains service dogs for the disabled will count. Helping at a fundraiser to send a school team out of state does NOT count but helping at a fundraiser that will provide backpacks for needy students will count.*
- **You must choose a service activity that will allow you to take pictures of yourself doing the act of service.**
- Submit proposal AT LEAST one week prior to the scheduled activity to ensure that this will count toward service hours.



CONFIRMATION SERVICE PROPOSAL

NAME:	GRADE/SECTION:
DATE:	
SERVICE DESCRIPTION:	ORGANIZATION:
WHY I CHOSE THIS:	WHAT I WILL DO: (Be specific)
PROJECTED TIMELINE	PROJECTED SERVICE HOURS
PROJECTED MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
<p>"I have reviewed this service project with my child, and I will support his/her with what is required to complete this project in a satisfactory manner."</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Parent Name/Signature/Date</p>	<p>Email form to confirmation@saintagnes.org PRIOR to doing this activity.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Not Approved</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>-----</p> <p>RE Office/Signature/Date</p>

"Faith in action is love. Love in action is service."
- St. Teresa of Calcutta

PARENT PREPARATION AGREEMENT

As a parent of a child preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, I will make every effort to participate fully in my child's preparation for this Sacrament, specifically:

- I will ensure that my child is adequately prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation through which they are made strong and more firmly obligated by word and deed to witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith (Canon Law 879).
- As a parent I am the first herald of the Faith to my child (CCC 1656). I will ensure the faith formation of my child and will ensure that my child completes their homework and other requirements assigned by their catechist (RE) or their Religion teacher (SAS). This includes:
 - Completion of weekly lessons & assessments at MCFD (for RE students) with a passing grade of 70% or more.
 - Completion of lessons, homework and tests for SAS students as required by their Religion teacher.
 - Completion of midterm and final exams with a passing grade of 70% or more
 - Completion of weekly Flipgrid Gospel reflections
 - Submission of service proposals and audio visual reflection
 - Submission of required forms and letter of intent in a timely manner.
- The Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the ages, is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life (Canon Law 897). I will ensure that my child participates each Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
- I will attend the 7th Grade retreat and ensure that my student attends and fully participates in this retreat as well.

I understand that Confirmation is NOT graduation from religious education but an important milestone in my child's journey toward intentional discipleship. Therefore, I will continue to support and encourage my child in the practice of the Faith throughout the year and in the succeeding years after Confirmation.

I understand that failure to complete the above requirements may defer my child's reception of the sacrament of Confirmation for the year 2024 (Spring of 8th Grade).

.....
Student's Name

.....
Parent's Name

.....
Parent Signature & Date

STUDENT PREPARATION AGREEMENT

As I prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, I will make every effort to adequately prepare for the reception of the Sacrament, specifically:

- The Lord commands us to “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8) and as I prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, I will attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in person each Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation.
- As it is written in Sacred Scripture, “Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). Therefore, in order to continue to grow in my knowledge of the faith, I will attend my Religious Education classes (**For RE students, no more than four absences are allowed**), complete my assignments in My Catholic Faith Delivered, and achieve an overall passing grade of 70% in my chapter/unit assessments and midterm and final exams.
- Christ came “not to be served, but to serve” (Mathew 28:20). Looking towards the example of Christ, I will selflessly and lovingly serve others as I prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation through the completion of a minimum of ten hours of parish or service to the poor and needy. I understand that I must submit a service proposal for pre-approval by the RE Office before undertaking my service.
- For each year of 7th & 8th Grades, I will reflect on how my service was a response to God’s love and a reflection of God’s love for others through an audio-visual presentation that demonstrates the acts of service I performed.
- Christ spent 40 days in the desert before He began his public ministry. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, I am more “strictly obligated to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” (CCC 1285). Therefore, I will attend and actively participate in the 7th Grade Confirmation retreat to prepare to receive the sacrament and to grow as a true witness of Christ.
- St. Jerome said “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” Therefore, I will nurture my relationship with Jesus Christ by reflecting on the Word of God in the Sunday Liturgical Readings and submit the Flipgrid Reflections each week as required.
- The fourth commandment, “Honor thy father and mother”, is addressed to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. However, it requires honor and gratitude be extended to the duties of pupils to teachers. (CCC 2199). I understand that the teachers, catechists and aides in the classroom and online represent my parents and deserve my attention and respect. I further understand that if my behavior is disruptive and does not improve after several warnings, I may be dismissed from the Confirmation class.
- I understand that failure to complete the above requirements will defer my reception of the sacrament of Confirmation for this year. However, the sacrament may be celebrated next year when I can complete these requirements.

.....
Student Name

.....
Student Signature & Date

LETTER OF INTENT

7th Grade candidates in the Confirmation formation process are asked to **neatly handwrite** a one to two page letter to our pastor, Fr. William P. Saunders.

Students are encouraged to write their letters from the heart, using the following questions as their guide. Each question should be answered completely.

- Introduce yourself. Tell something about your family, your background, your interests, etc.
- What does being confirmed mean to you?
- What does being a member of this parish community mean to you?
- What does your faith mean to you? What does it mean to you to be Catholic?
- What role do God and your faith play in your everyday life?
- Why do you want to be confirmed? How are you preparing for this Sacrament?
- How will you participate in our parish community after you receive the sacrament of Confirmation? How do you plan to continue your commitment to the Catholic Church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in order to keep your faith real and alive in the future?

Letter Writing Format Confirmation Letter of Intent

1. You must neatly handwrite your letter in ink and in your best penmanship. Messy illegible letters will be returned to be redone. Hieroglyphics will not be accepted.
2. Use correct letter format for friendly letters. Use your own home address for the heading.
3. Address your letter to Rev. William P. Saunders: "Dear Fr. Saunders,"
4. In the first paragraph, introduce yourself.
5. The succeeding paragraphs should each address the questions above.
6. In the final paragraph (last question from above), tell how you hope to live out the commitment to Jesus and the Church which you make in Confirmation.
7. Use a correct closing, such as "Sincerely yours" or "Sincerely".
8. Sign your name.
9. Place your letter in a clean envelope, addressed to Rev. William P. Saunders. Write your own name on the upper left-hand corner of the envelope.

DUE DATE: March 31, 2023

*"The world offers you comfort, but you are not created for comfort.
You are created for greatness."*

- Pope Benedict XVI

CONFIRMATION 7TH GRADE IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES

2022

**September
20**

RE CLASSES
BEGIN

**October
11**

7TH GRADE
PARENT &
STUDENT
MEETING

**October
16**

FLIPGRID
GOSPEL
REFLECTIONS
BEGIN

**October
21**

APPLICATION &
PREPARATION
POLICIES DUE

**November
1**

ALL SOULS
HOLY DAY OF
OBLIGATION

**November
5**

STUDENT &
PARENT RETREAT

**December
8**

IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
HOLY DAY

**December
25**

CHRISTMAS
HOLY DAY OF
OBLIGATION

2023

**January
1**

MARY, MOTHER
OF GOD
HOLY DAY

**January
17**

MIDTERM
EXAM

**March
31**

LETTER OF
INTENT DUE

**April
30**

LAST DAY FOR
FLIPGRID

**May
3**

RIISING 8TH
GRADE MEETING

**May
9**

FINAL EXAM

**May
11**

SERVICE
PROJECT DUE

5 Spiritual Effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation

from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1303



CHILD OF GOD

It roots us more deeply as children of God which makes us cry, "Abba, Father!"

EFFECT

1



GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



EFFECT

2

CLOSER TO CHRIST

It unites us more firmly to our Savior Jesus Christ.

It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us: wisdom, counsel, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, fear of the Lord.

EFFECT

3

FULLY CATHOLIC

It renders our bond with the Catholic Church more perfect.



DEFEND THE FAITH

It gives us a special strength to spread and defend the Faith as true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

EFFECT

4



EFFECT

5

The **Catholic** Company®
Because Faith Matters