

ST AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION HANDBOOK

YEAR I (7TH GRADE) 2024-2025





ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. AGNES PARISH

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MISSION STATEMENT

Called by our Lord Jesus Christ, and strengthened by His Word and Sacraments, as faithful Catholics, we strive to be 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 Year 1 Confirmation Students,

Welcome to our Confirmation Program at St. Agnes. Confirmation at St. Agnes is a two year preparation where students begin preparation usually 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 Year 1, 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 promises and help you become all that God created you to be.

Blessings,

Lisa Orosa
Director of Faith Formation
dff@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

YEAR 1 REQUIREMENTS

PARENT & STUDENT RETREAT

The student and at least one parent are required to attend a mandatory retreat. The retreat will help participants reflect on God's purpose for their lives as they prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. SAVE THE DATE: October 19, 2024



FORMS

Baptismal Certificate, Confirmation Application Form, Student & Parent Preparation forms are required for Year 1 Confirmation. See parish website for forms and details. DUE DATE: September 30, 2024

MASS JOURNALS & OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

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 faithful Catholic is one who joyfully participates at Mass, reflects on the Word of God and generously offers a portion of their blessings as a sign of thanksgiving to God and in support of the Church. Students are expected to thoughtfully complete their weekly Mass journals and drop their offertory/prayer request envelopes at every Sunday Mass at St. Agnes. Mass journals are to be submitted at the end of each month. Mass Journals & offertory envelopes begin on October 6th.

PARENT & FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

Parents play a pivotal role in supporting their children and modeling holiness and discipleship. As such, we ask parents to attend to the monthly family faith formation classes held on the 1st RE Tuesday meeting of each month to get the support and formation they need and build community.



SERVING CHRIST IN THE CHURCH

Service to the poor, the needy and the Church is a response to God's love who calls us to generously share our time and talents. In addition, studies have shown that young people are more likely to stay in the Faith when they know and serve with other adults who serve in the parish. *Students are expected to serve primarily through the Church in parish-wide days of service and help in parish events/ministries for a total of 10 hours each year.* Due Date: April 4, 2025

KEY DATES

Registration & forms: September 30, 2024
Year 1 (7th Gr) Retreat: October 19, 2024

NOTE: Non-St. Agnes parishioners will need to submit a permission letter from their pastor to receive the Sacraments at St. Agnes

MASS JOURNALS

***"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."

Each Sunday and holy days of obligation, students will be asked to thoughtfully reflect on the Gospel Reading through Mass Journal sheets. These Mass journal sheets are due at the end of the month.

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

***"Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life."
(1Timothy 6:17-19)***

Students are asked to practice stewardship, generously and joyfully offering a portion of God's blessing in support of the Church. Confirmandi will be given offertory/intercessory envelopes that are labeled with their names and date. Students are asked to prayerfully reflect on the many blessings God has given them and to offer a small portion of their blessings each week in their offertory envelope. In addition, the student may also include a slip of paper in the envelope with their prayer intentions. This will be collected by the ushers during offertory at Sunday Mass in St. Agnes. (NOTE: These envelopes are only for use in St. Agnes.)

In the event that the student forgets to bring the envelope, the envelopes found in the pews or at the Narthex may be used.

If students attend Sunday Mass at another Church, they may submit their envelopes to the Parish Office.

Mass Journals and Offertory Envelopes begin on October 6, 2024.

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.

Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) students are expected to serve the Church and the poor through service projects and events sponsored by St. Agnes Church. Confirmation candidates are expected to serve in both Family Days of Service to be held in the Fall and the Spring. In addition, they must serve in at least 2 more activities sponsored by St. Agnes Church for an annual total of 10 hours. These include:

- Baking cookies for Christ House (Contact: Alice.paxton@paladinlifecare.com)
- Help with gardening in the Church with the Gardening Angels (Contact: jshirhall@gmail.com)
- Babysitting during Adult Formation Events (Contact: dff@saintagnes.org)
- Help at the St. Magdalene Retreat or the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration (Contact: littlecubb@aol.com)
- Help with Donut Sunday and other parish events like the Confirmation Reception, as needed.

Note: Activities and events sponsored by St. Agnes school do NOT count toward Confirmation Service hours. **For a service activity to count, it must be open to both St. Agnes school students and Religious Education students and the activity/event is sponsored by St. Agnes Church.** If you would like to serve the poor or the parish in an activity not listed above, please contact Mrs. Orosa for approval at dff@saintagnes.org. In addition, service activities outside of St. Agnes Parish may be accepted (with pre-approval) for half-credit. Please fill out the Service Log in the next page and submit by the due date.



“The soul of one who serves God always swims in joy, always keeps holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardor and fresh pleasure a new song of joy and love.”

-Saint John of the Cross

SERVICE ACTIVITY REPORT

| NAME: | | | GRADE: | |
|----------|------|-------|-----------------|----------------------|
| ACTIVITY | DATE | HOURS | SUPERVISOR NAME | SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”
Then the righteous will answer him, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”
(Matthew 25:35-40)



DUE DATE: APRIL 4, 2025

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 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 Mass Journal reflections and timely submission of Offertory Envelopes
 - Participation in Family Day of Service events at St. Agnes Church and other parish-sponsored activities.
 - Submission of required forms 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 Confirmation Year 1 (7th Grade) retreat and ensure that my student attends and fully participates in this retreat as well.
- I will attend to my own personal faith formation and participate in the monthly family faith formation on the 1st RE session of each month.

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 delay my child's reception of the sacrament of Confirmation for Spring 2026 to Spring 2027 .

.....
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 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 participation in the St. Agnes Family Days of Service and other parish-sponsored volunteer activities, as indicated in this handbook. I understand that any activities not listed here must be pre-approved by the Director of Faith Formation.
- 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 Year 1 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 Mass Journal Reflections each week as required.
- “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1Peter 4:10) As a sign of my gratitude for my many blessings, I will contribute to the needs of the poor and the Church in my weekly offertory envelope.
- 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 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 may delay my reception of the sacrament of Confirmation for this school year. I understand that I may receive Confirmation in the following year, once I am fully prepared to receive the sacrament.

.....
Student Name

.....
Student Signature & Date

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.

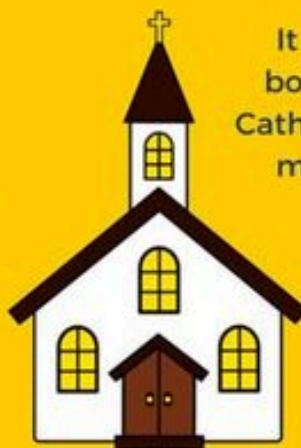


DEFEND THE FAITH

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