

ST. THOMAS MORE CHURCH CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS



1. CLASSES

Students are required to attend all Confirmation classes held on Wednesday evenings. If a student needs to miss a class for a serious reason they must receive permission from Rachel Mark (692-8309). All missed classes will be made up with a one page written paper on the topic that was covered during the absence. The texts used are "*The Catholic Faith Handbook*" by St. Mary's Press, and "*Christ Our Life: Confirmed in the Spirit*" by Loyola Press. A Confirmation test will be given to all candidates toward the end of the year. It is also required that all Confirmed students complete their full junior year of Religious Education after Confirmation from September 2009-May of 2010.

2. CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christian service takes place outside of class. We ask that you give back (at least 20 hours) to the Lord in Christian service as a pattern for Christian living. About half of your service should be dedicated to the church and religious activities. Families are strongly encouraged to do service together. (What a great witness to your own family, the parish and the entire community!) Students are asked to write up a **SERVICE REPORT** and turn it in at the Confirmation Interview.

3. SCRIPTURE / HOMILY REFLECTIONS

Confirmation candidates are required to submit *five (5) written reflections from five different Sunday liturgies in their home parish.* The reflections are brief summaries of the scripture readings as well as Father's homily and how they can be applied to your daily life. Forms for the written reflections can be found in a large manila envelope in the pamphlet rack in the gathering space of St. Thomas More or on the office counter at Pius XII Newman Center. The form must be signed or initialed by the priest celebrating the Mass that day. Each time a reflection is complete it is given to the Religious Education teacher on the following Wednesday evening. All forms are to be completed by April 1, 2009.

4. CONFIRMATION RETREAT

All Confirmation candidates are required to attend one retreat this year. The purpose of the retreat is to provide a different and deeper opportunity for candidates to explore their faith. The parish and diocese offer several retreats that can fulfill this requirement: Totus Tuus, SEARCH Retreat, Catholic Heart Work Camp Service Trip, Steubenville Youth Conference, or Discipleship Camp (D-Camp). Details on these retreats are included in this packet.

5. CONFIRMATION INTERVIEW

The STUDENTS and their PARENT who plan to be Confirmed will be interviewed by a parish staff member to determine the readiness for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Interviews will be held in September 2009.

6. CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL

The *TENTATIVE* date for Confirmation is the **Fall of 2009.** Both candidates and their sponsors are required to be at the rehearsal prior to the Confirmation Mass.

7. CONFIRMATION DAY!

The *DATE* will be announced once confirmed with the Bishop. (tentatively Fall 2009)

We will assemble in the Social Hall a half-hour before the service.

There will be a reception for family and friends following the Mass.

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS: Why do we do them?

This process of preparation for Confirmation is common throughout the country and in our diocese. The Confirmation Requirements basically consists of:

- Class Attendance
- Service to Others
- Mass Attendance & 5 Scripture Reflections
- A Retreat Experience



Class Attendance: Regular attendance is important because it is an opportunity for ongoing faith formation in the lives of our young people. Through sincere participation in this process many students have their first real conversion of heart and personal ownership of their growing faith life...they start to really “get it”. Also, we find that around the junior year students start to take things more seriously and start to become more grounded in the essentials of our Catholic faith, they have greater potential to integrate it, and to defend it when questioned and explain it when asked.

Service to Others: By virtue of our Baptism, and affirmed in the sacrament of Confirmation, we are called to live a life of service. Our faith comes alive by the works we do for the least of our sisters and brothers. A life of service therefore is essential to the life of discipleship that we are called to live out through the sacrament of Confirmation. We do not do service to “get confirmed”. We do service because we are Catholic Christians...and to show that we are ready and willing to live the life of a fully initiated Catholic Christian. Service IS a sacrifice of ourselves and our time...it is a challenge to reflect on what our priorities are, but we do it because we believe it is essential to whom we are as true followers of Christ and hopefully it becomes part of the fabric of who we are as persons!

Mass Attendance & Scripture Reflections: Students are highly encouraged to make Sunday Mass the central aspect of their Confirmation Preparation. “The Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed.” God knew how important it would be for people to gather as community, so he made keeping the Lord's Day holy a commandment. We hope our young people learn that to celebrate the Eucharist in community is to be held above all other things like our busy-ness or sports. It is in the Eucharist that we meet our Lord face to face and share an intimate union with Him by receiving His Real Presence, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in Holy Communion. Our participation in the Mass strengthens us and helps us to grow in the Christian life.

We ask for scripture / homily reflections because it is up to us to apply our Mass experience to daily living. So, there is an exercise in listening, reflecting and applying the Word of God in their life.

A Retreat Experience: Retreats are a vital part of any well-rounded faith development program. They address a teen's need for reflection time in their busy lives and they are a chance to “go deeper” and experience a significant faith event in their lives. It's a time where they listen to short witness talks (usually by people closer to their age) and they have the opportunity to share their own thoughts, beliefs, questions and struggles...and hopefully develop a better understanding of themselves and their relationship with God. Unfortunately, many teenagers don't take the voluntary opportunity to make a retreat on their own and it has proven to be such a growth filled experience in many cases that we ask that they make at least one mini-retreat during their formational years with us.

In the end...the basic elements of the Confirmation program are really just the basics of what each of us is called to live in our daily Christian lives. For some students this process has little effect and for others it has a deep effect, which we find very evident in our Confirmation interviews. A lot has to do with each young person's own personal response and openness to embracing the opportunities set before them. We strongly believe that it would be pastorally harmful to our teenagers if we did not offer them these important opportunities to grow personally and spiritually at this stage of their spiritual development.

YOUR ROLE AS A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

If you have been asked to be a Confirmation sponsor, *Congratulations!* This person sees in you a profound faith commitment, finds trust and knows you are someone who will care about them and their faith.

The criteria the students use for selecting a sponsor includes: someone who is a practicing, faith-filled, adult Catholic; someone who is able to relate to a teenager; someone with whom the candidate is comfortable; someone who is able to share their own faith experiences; someone who is a good listener and can be a friend for the faith journey that the candidate will be undertaking in the coming months. As you see, the sponsor is more than someone they want to honor or flatter. This is a serious decision on their part, and the sponsor plays a very important role in their preparation.

Before agreeing to be a sponsor, please understand your expected commitments:

January 21, 2009	Return Confirmation Sponsor's Covenant Form
February 22 or 23, 2009	Attend one meeting to learn about our program
March 2000-September 2009	Make monthly contact by phone, mail, or in person (Information for discussion will be provided at Feb. mtg.)
October 2009	Sacrament of Confirmation Rehearsal and Liturgy

If you have any questions or concerns about being a sponsor, about the meeting or program, please feel free to call me at 692-8309.

Rachel Mark
Youth Formation Director

Suggested reading resources on Confirmation and the role of the sponsor:

Articles by Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M. from AmericanCatholic.org:
<http://www.americancatholic.org/features/Sacraments/Confirmation.asp>

Article by Archbishop John Vlazny in the Catholic Sentinel:
<http://www.sentinel.org/node/8821>

On Confirmation and the Confirmation Liturgy:
<http://www.fisheaters.com/confirmation.html>

St. Thomas More Church

Confirmation Retreat Information

Dear Confirmation families,

As you know, all Confirmation candidates are required to make a retreat before Confirmation. We have a variety of retreat opportunities listed below. If you choose a different retreat please let Rachel know which retreat you are attending.

Totus Tuus (Latin for Totally Yours)

Dates: July 26-30, 2009 (7:30-9:30pm)

Place: St. Thomas More Church

Cost: Free (for Confirmation students)



The mission of Totus Tuus is to inspire in young people a true longing for holiness, a desire for conversion, and personal renewal. We strive to help young people to understand their Catholic faith through catechesis, so that they may live it in today's world. We do this in such a way that it is fun and exciting. The program is run by college aged students and seminarians, who are trained and put into teams of four to go into parishes for a week. There they put on a "parish mission" for young people. With joy and honor, Totus Tuus serves the youth and shares with them the blessings that God has given them.

ST. THOMAS MORE SERVICE TRIP CATHOLIC HEART WORKCAMP

Dates: June 21-27, 2009

Place: Twin Cities, MN

Cost: Before Dec. 31...\$350

Before Feb. 28th...\$365 After Feb. 28th.....\$380

FREE DAY ACTIVITIES

Taylor's Falls

Canoeing & Kayaking down the St. Croix River, which flows through some of the most scenic and undeveloped country in the Midwest!



There is both a Spiritual and Service element to this program, so participation in the Service Trip will cover ALL of your Confirmation Service and Retreat requirements:

The Twin Cities area is host to the largest "Among" community in the world outside of Asia and the largest Somali population in the United States, most of whom are immigrant refugees. Each day will be spent renewing homes by doing such things as painting, weatherization, housecleaning, yard work, basic construction work, hanging doors, installing new windows; or helping to build new homes for low income families, working to revitalize blighted neighborhoods by boarding up or tearing down unoccupied buildings, cleaning up vacant lots; helping at day care centers for low income families by assisting with children's programs, working at homeless shelters or refurbishing the buildings; or helping to distribute food to the needy. There will be a free day to enjoy the sites!

SEARCH Retreat Program

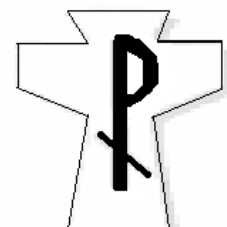
Dates: January 16-18, 2009 or April 3-5, 2009 (Aberdeen)

February 6-8, 2009 or June 5-7, 2009 (Sioux Falls)

Place: Roncalli High School, Aberdeen, SD

Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Sioux Falls

Cost: \$45.00 (\$10.00 of which is non-refundable)



Please mail the entire fee with your application three weeks before the weekend.

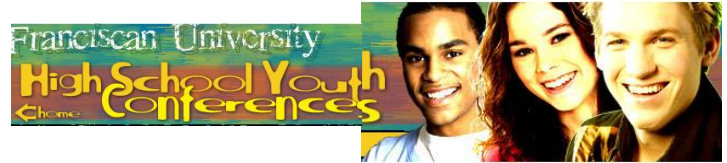
Forms and information can be found at <http://www.search4christianmaturity.com/>

WHAT IS SEARCH?

SEARCH for Christian Maturity is a Roman Catholic oriented retreat program. Young adults and adult coordinators who have made a SEARCH will be conducting the weekend. The weekend consists of talks, skits, music, and receiving the sacraments of the church. There are student directors and a priest does act as Spiritual Director on the weekend.

Steubenville Youth Conference

is an unforgettable weekend filled with praise, fellowship, and fun!



Dates: July 17-19, 2009 -OR- June 18-22, 2009 (trip with the Diocese)

Place: This conference is held in Rochester, MN with an amazing team of speakers & musicians, as well as youth from all over, you won't want to miss it!
This conference is held on the beautiful *Franciscan University of Steubenville* (Ohio) campus.

Cost: Approx. \$200 Approx. \$400

Who: Anyone entering grades 9-12 in Fall 2009/Recently graduated



D-CAMP

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SIOUX FALLS

JR. HIGH | JULY 16-19
Grades 6-8 (2009-10 school year)

SR. HIGH | JULY 12-15
Grades 9-12 (2009-10 school year)

Join other high schoolers for 3 days of faith and fun. Campers bunk together in cabins overlooking Lake Poinsett with shower houses nearby. Free time allows for swimming, canoeing, paddle boating, and inflatable water games. During the day, you will hear talks to help you grow in your faith, bond with a small group of other teens, compete in all-camp Olympic games, have the chance to go to Mass, Confession, and Adoration, and meet lots of new friends. Experience the hand of God in your life in a new and deeper way, and the life-changing truth of the Sacraments.

Cost: \$200

All Registration forms should be available on the parish website
www.stthomasbrookings.parishesonline.com, under Youth Forms on right side bar.

Suggested Christian Service Activities for Confirmation Candidates

At least 10 hours should be in service to the Church.

Serve St. Thomas More Church...

Religious Education Aide *(Teach the young!)*

Help out in the classroom with the younger children on Wednesdays. *Contact Rachel or Deb Gilk*

Teach Preschool Vacation Bible School *(Teach the young!)*

Volunteer to teach 3, 4, or 5 year olds during their VBS the mornings of July 27-31, (same week as Totus Tuus). *Contact Joanna Hageman at STM*

Babysitting

Baby-sit for free for someone who cannot afford to pay for a sitter or for a single parent who needs a day out. Volunteer to babysit in the church nursery or during choir practice. *Contact LeeAnn Meyer at STM*

Assist in the Activity Center

Help supervise and work with younger students in the Activity Center on Wednesday nights. Other options are helping with homework and snack time in the social hall, or with craft time, 2:30-3:30. *Contact Rachel*

Food & Fellowship suppers *(Feed the Hungry!)*

Help out with the Wednesday night suppers...serving, cleaning up, etc. *Contact Rachel*

Drama Group

Be involved in dramas during the year...such as Living Stations of the cross, *Contact Rachel*
Or help with children's Gospel skits during the year. *Contact Deb Gilk at STM*

Church Choir

Join a church choir and share your gift of music with us. *Contact LeeAnn Meyer at STM*

Church Chores

Help with some things that need to be done around the church...such as dusting the pews, organizing, setting up classrooms in the summer, cleaning RE supplies in the spring, and outside building & grounds work.
Contact Rachel or Deb Gilk

Youth Council

Help plan and implement youth activities for the year. *Contact Esther*

Children Helping Children

Assist with this project by gathering and totaling money each week, as well as creating posters of the children in Africa we'll be sponsoring. *Contact Rachel*

Lock-In's

Help plan and work an overnight Lock-in for middle school students. *Contact Esther*

Church Environment

Help prepare the church environment for Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons. *Contact Rachel*

Parish Picnic *(September 2009)*

Help with root beer floats, at the inflatable games, or yard relays at the picnic. *Contact Rachel or Esther*

Coffee & Rolls Sunday mornings *(Feed the Hungry!)*

The time you are scheduled to help with coffee and rolls will count towards your service hours.

Serve the Brookings Community...

Mentoring *(Teach the young!)*

Offer to tutor a younger student in Jr. High or the Elementary school.
Contact the school principal.

Volunteer at the Library

Contact the library and ask what kinds of service opportunities are available.

Serve at a Soup Kitchen *(Feed the Hungry!)*

Help serve food and fellowship to the poor of our communities, such as the Harvest Table in Brookings. Meals served Monday nights at the Methodist church. *Contact Methodist church*

Helping Hands Christmas-Project Joy *(formerly known as the Angel Tree)*

Volunteer to help set up the store, help collect donations or do some shopping
Contact person: Cara Beers, cara.beers@state.sd.us

Habitat for Humanity *(Shelter the Homeless!)*

Help build homes for low-income families at a building site or at warehouses, organizing materials, moving furniture, etc. www.habitat.org. *Contact #: 692-5601*

Nursing Home Visiting *(Visit the Lonely!)*

Visit the elderly residents in the nursing home. They love to see youthful smiling faces! It may also be possible to help the Activities Director provided some of the activities.
Contact the nursing home.

Hospital Volunteer *(Visit the Sick!)*

Contact the hospital and ask what kind of volunteer services are available.

Help the Elderly *(Visit the lonely)*

Do errands for shut-ins, help them do their Christmas cards or shovel their sidewalks, etc.

Serve the Wider Community...

Summer Service Trip

(Shelter the Homeless, Feed the Hungry, Teach the Young, Visit the Lonely, & much more!)

Participate in our summer service trip. In the past years we went to Omaha and Chicago. *Contact Esther*

Fundraising/Service Opportunities...

Helping with these events can count as service hours OR to help pay for your retreat/trip. *Discuss with Esther.*

- Middle School Dance (Plan/Advertise/Set-up/DJ/Clean-up)
- Mother's Day Rose Sale (Help arrange roses/sell arrangements after masses)
- Fish Fry (Prepare/Serve/Clean-up with Knights of Columbus)

Be Creative!

Any other ideas should be ok'd in advance by Rachel