

CHRISTIAN SERVICE REQUIREMENT

SAINT THOMAS MORE PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAM



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"Act Justly ~ Love Tenderly ~ Walk Humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)

OVERVIEW – THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION AND THE PARISH PROGRAM

“Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation. By the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of Baptismal grace:

- It roots us more deeply as children of God
- It unites us more firmly to Christ
- It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- It strengthens our ties to the Church
- It encourages us to faithfully live, spread, and defend our faith

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian towards more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit. Further, this catechesis should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the universal church and to the parish community.” (*From the Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

The St. Thomas More Parish Confirmation Program is a two-year program designed to provide participants with sufficient spiritual and academic preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. All student participants and parents are expected to contribute to the effectiveness and strength of the program. The program requires candidates for the sacrament to actively participate in both the academic and spiritual components of the program as well as following all of the established policies. Parents and students must honestly seek to use the program as a means to discover and experience the great truths of God and the Roman Catholic Church. The program helps all associated with it to examine their Baptismal call and to search for God's place in their lives. Primarily students do this by actively developing their own spiritual life, by partaking in the spiritual life of the parish, and by appropriately participating in the academic, spiritual, and the Christian service requirements of the program.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF STMP CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

At the end of the program, our hope is that each student participant will;

1. Demonstrate an appreciation for and understanding of basic Catholic doctrine related to God, Scripture, the Sacraments and Morality.
2. Identify and articulate specific ways that they are called to live as Catholic Christians in the world.
3. Establish the groundwork that will foster a lifetime relationship with God and the Church.
4. Develop an understanding of the various types of prayer and the importance of personal prayer in their relationship with God.
5. Experience personal faith development, i.e. an understanding of their personal relationship with God, the role of the sacraments and scripture in their life, the role of the Church in their life, and their role as Christians in the wider society.
6. Discover how to use the skills fostered in the program to address issues in their life.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

In the Sacrament of Confirmation we receive the outpouring and fullness of God’s Holy Spirit, the third person of the Blessed Trinity. Before his Ascension, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to remind His followers of all that He taught. The Spirit leads us to greater communion with Jesus Christ. On the first Pentecost the Spirit infused in the Apostles the strength they needed to act courageously enough to publicly proclaim in word and action that they were followers of Christ. This is the exact same Spirit that is received in Confirmation.

The Confirmation Program allows students to learn about the Holy Spirit, the gifts He gives, and the proper ways to use those gifts for personal growth and for the growth of the faith community. In the sacrament each receives an abundant outpouring of God’s gifts through the Holy Spirit. Those gifts include, but are not limited to; wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, awe,

charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. (Cf. Isa. 11:1-2, Gal. 5:22-23) The myriad gifts of God's Spirit are given freely so that each person may develop personal holiness and share her/his gifts with the faith community and the wider community. Through the distribution of these gifts the Kingdom of God is spread throughout the earth.

In the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the recipient decides to fully join the faith community and to make his/her gifts and talents available to the faith community.

THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

We believe that we are saved through the merits of Jesus Christ. We also believe that our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to live in greater harmony with God and one another. St. Paul says that faith without good works is empty. All of the participants in the Confirmation Program act on the faith that they have and are developing by serving other people in the name of Jesus Christ. Through this service, they begin to recognize the gifts that God is developing in them and to see some of the ways they may share those gifts with others.

Before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, students will complete several significant acts of Christian Service, which together must take at least 15 hours of time. All Christian service must come from one of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy.

Long ago Christians saw the importance of the "works of mercy." The works of mercy are ways to express your love of God and concern for others in a special way. Several of the works of mercy that can be done to lend someone a helping hand are called the *corporal works of mercy* – in other words, works which meet another's bodily need. Other works are called *spiritual works of mercy* – they help meet the needs of the human soul.

The main idea behind the works of mercy can be found in the Gospel account of Matthew. The Gospel says that Jesus taught his followers, "I say to you whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Christian Service is different from community service. While both are noble, one develops spiritual virtue and the other deals with civic virtue. Similarly, one is a personal response to faith and God's call while the other promotes good social order. Christian Service is a response to the specific calls from the Christian Scriptures to model our lives on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christian Service is seen through the examples and concrete teachings of Christ. It is action done in the name of Jesus Christ because he instructed his followers to do these actions.

Christian Service is the attempt by the follower of Christ to use the gifts that God has given to internalize and respond to the Gospel message in the place where s/he currently finds her/himself.

Christian Service is done to deepen one's faith, to share the good news of the Gospel, and to share the gifts that God has given. It is not done to strengthen a college application or a resume, to thwart boredom, to earn money or accolades, nor to meet the basic requirements and obligations of family or community membership.

TYPES OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE ALLOWED

All Christian service must come from one of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy. “The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his/her spiritual and bodily necessities.” (From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*) The Christian Service may come from different types of works or the same type of work. Participants will complete the reflection exercises in this booklet, which require description of and reflection on the service completed and some Scripture passages.

The corporal works of mercy are feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and the imprisoned. The spiritual works of mercy include, instructing, advising, and counseling. Listed below are examples of the types of service that would satisfy each of the categories. *Not all options are listed, simply some examples.*

feeding the hungry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •work in a food pantry •participation in charity drives (e.g. Walk for Hunger) •assisting with Serve New England •assisting in environmental projects
sheltering the homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •work in a shelter or soup kitchen •work on gift drives for the needy •participation in a program like Habitat for Humanity •assisting in immigrant programs
clothing the naked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •participating organizing clothing or other charitable programs for the needy •raising money for the needy •participating in programs that promote social justice
visiting the sick & imprisoned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •assisting at a nursing home or hospital •assisting the elderly •helping those with special needs •spending time with or assisting those experiencing physical or mental illness
instructing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •work in a religious education class or office •tutoring •volunteering to teach in a school or camp program
advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •peer ministry •assisting in school and parish programs •work in youth ministry
counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •volunteering at a camp •volunteering working to assist support groups or counseling programs •teaching

These are suggestions and thoughts to encourage the participant's search for the best service opportunity that will meet the requirements of the program and develop the student's gifts. Candidates may complete service from one or several of the categories above. *To ensure that service completed will meet the program requirement, the Director of Confirmation should approve any service ideas not listed on the chart above BEFORE the service is completed.*

Below are the names and telephone numbers of some groups that may provide excellent opportunities for students to fulfill their Christian Service requirement. Again, these are only some suggestions ~ students may complete service at any location that will provide an opportunity for appropriate Christian Service.

Organization	Number/Contact
Your School	
Braintree Council on Aging	781-848-1963/Sandy
Braintree Community Food Pantry	781-356-0161
Diane DeVanna Center	781-843-7010/Ellen
Fr. Bill's Place	617-770-3314/Tom
Friends of the Unborn	617-786-7903/Marilyn
Greater Boston Food Bank	617-427-5200/Stephen
Habitat for Humanity - South Shore	781-843-9080
Braintree Manor	781-848-4710/ Ann Marie
John Scott House (weekend help needed)	781-843-1860/Michael
Kids Clothes Closet (7-8:30 pm needed)	781-843-0410/Debbie
Marge Crispin Center	781-848-2124
Milton Hospital	617-696-4600
New England Shelter for Homeless Vets	617-248-9400
Pine Street Inn	617-521-7626/Scottie
St. Vincent DePaul Society @ St. Thomas More	781-843-1980/Kevin
Quincy Medical Center	617-773-6100
Rosie's Place	617-442-9322
Cardinal Cushing Center	781-826-6371/Marilyn
South Shore Elder Services	781-848-3910
South Shore Special Religious Education	Anne Vail 781-843-2142
St. Thomas More Religious Education Office	Anne Vail 781-843-2142

SCRIPTURE READING AND REFLECTION

Each candidate for Confirmation will complete five scripture reading and reflection exercises as part of the Christian Service Project. The purpose of these exercises is to encourage the candidate to read about and reflect on the call to service, the gifts that the Spirit has given, and the need to share those gifts with the Christian community.

Any of five of the references listed below will be acceptable. References list the book of the Bible first, followed by the chapter of that book and finally the verses in that chapter.

Mark 9: 33-35

Mark 10: 17-22

James 1: 19-25

James 2: 1-8

James 2: 14-26

I Corinthians 1: 1-13

Matthew 25: 14-30

Matthew 25: 31-46

Matthew 10: 37-39

Mark 12: 28-34

Mark 12: 41-44

Luke 6: 20-26

Luke 6: 43-45

Luke 9: 23-27

Luke 10: 29-37

Luke 19: 11-27

John 15: 1-10

I Peter 4: 8-11

Romans 12: 9-21

II Corinthians 8: 8-15

Ephesians 4: 7-16

I Thessalonians 5: 12-22

