

St. Matthew's Church
2008-09 Confirmation Orientation Meeting

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Introduction

Confirmation comes at an important stage in the development of our young people's lives. They are in the throes of puberty involving dramatic physical, cognitive, and emotional developmental growth and change. They have graduated from Church School and typically are in their final year of middle school preparing to enter high school. Additionally, they have reached the stage where they struggle between their own identity and role. They are discovering who they are and where they fit into the world.

Why do we confirm? In the 1549 Prayer Book, the benefit to Confirmation was in "receiving of 'strength and defense' against the temptations associated with that period in a child's life." While we do not use such strident language, we acknowledge the importance of the Church in the lives of our young people, particularly at this age. Our current Book of Common Prayer states that Confirmation is when "those baptized at an early age...make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism." The most important goal of confirmation is to help our young people witness, experience and learn about the love of Christ.

Purpose of Confirmation

Confirmation at St. Matthew's is a rigorous but fun program that aids students transitioning from Church School to full worship services and provides them with a venue for discussing important topics in their lives in a safe environment. In preparing for confirmation, our young people will learn about the Church in terms of worship and its mission. They will deepen their understanding of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They will grow their faith as an aid to successfully navigate their adolescence and a foundation for their adult lives.

Prerequisites:

In order to provide a successful and fruitful experience to all participants in the confirmation program, St. Matthew's asks each young person who wants to join the program to complete several summer assignments and take a test. St. Matthew's has a long history of such confirmation requirements. Though some may see tests and assignments as too rigorous, we require these as a means to make sure that all who join the confirmation program have a basic knowledge of the Bible and the Church. Confirmation is not a means of teaching our young people the basics of the Christian faith; rather it is where they can explore more deeply what makes us Christian. If anyone does not pass the test or fulfill the assignments, they will be asked to either meet with the

Associate Rector or teachers for extra help, and/or attend church for the year, where they will gain sufficient knowledge to enter the confirmation program in the following year.

Confirmation Events

Confirmation Commissioning Service – Sunday, June 8th at the 10 a.m. service

Confirmation Retreat – Saturday, September 6th to Sunday September 7th
Incarnation Center, Ivoryton, Connecticut

Sermon Sunday – February 1, 2009

Do You Know Your Neighbor's Faith – April 2009

Mother's Day Service – Sunday, May 10, 2009 at 10 a.m. service

Confirmation Requirements

- Complete the summer Bible reading assignment and paper.
- Attend Sunday worship services per the Church School Calendar.
- Attend class meetings in October, November, January, February, April and May.
- Acolyte as scheduled.
- Complete three hours of Christian service work.
- Complete and pass all required homework and quizzes.
- Complete and present a sermon on Sermon Sunday (February 1, 2009).
- Complete homework as assigned.

Confirmands may miss only six events (i.e. Sunday service, group meeting, and other services or events). Confirmand who fail to meet the requirements will defer confirmation to another year.

Parents and Confirmation

Parents play a crucial role in the life of the confirmand. Your support during the confirmation year helps to solidify the entire program. You're the mortar that holds all of St. Matthew's work together. We recommend parents and confirmand openly and honestly discuss the decision to undertake the confirmation year. Since baptism is considered full membership in the church and the only requirement in order to receive communion, confirmation is encouraged but not required. Confirmation is a time for family spiritual growth. Your support of your confirmand throughout the year by regular, faithful church attendance, open discussions about faith and family prayer are essential.

We strongly encourage you to purposefully meet with the child to discuss their own faith journey and the challenges they have faced in their own lives.

Sponsors and the Confirmand

Each confirmand is required to select a sponsor. Usually, a sponsor is a caring adult from the St. Matthew's community, who may be a relative of the confirmand. It is important that the confirmand has input and say regarding whom they feel comfortable sponsoring them for confirmation. Consideration must be made to the commitment and faithfulness of the sponsor. The major role for the sponsor is to support the confirmand. We encourage the sponsor to meet with the confirmand several times during the confirmation year. A sponsor is someone who believes in the confirmation process. The sponsor should be available to help the confirmand write their sermon. The sponsor should also be available to attend the Christmas Holiday party, Sermon Sunday, the "Why Church Matters" event and other program events.

Support from St. Matthew's

The clergy encourage parents to discuss their confirmand's growth and development with each other and with other parents. Additionally, the clergy are available to meet with parents to answer questions and to provide guidance. Also, we will have a supper for the parents of confirmands to discuss faith development in teenagers.