

St. Mark's Church

Religious Education Program



Confirmation Handbook

2025-2026

Father Miguel Virella, SVD., Pastor

Diana Zuna, Director of Religious Education

215 Crescent Parkway, Sea Girt, NJ 08750

(732) 449-6364 ext. 105

diana@stmarkseagirt.com

Dear Parents of the Confirmation Candidates,

Welcome to St. Mark's Sacrament of Confirmation Program. I am so delighted to be part of this parish family and I am blessed to be trusted with this preparation program. During this year, we the Church, and your family will journey together to share in the important responsibility for your child's Confirmation preparation phase. The Sacrament of Confirmation is an exciting and intense time for young Catholics.

The Sacrament of Confirmation program will allow your teen to grow closer to Christ and His Church through regular sessions at which your children will be drawn into a deeper faith that will transform their hearts and change their lives not only during their Confirmation preparation phase, but into the rest of their high school and young adult years. Confirmation is not the end of the road; it is not the final step in faith, it is the stepping stone into a mature religious life.

The best preparation that you, as a parent, can give your son or daughter is to practice and live your Catholic faith through word and deed. As you continue ministering to your family, your parish, and your community, we ask you to be especially faithful in attending Sunday liturgy. It is your example that will have the greatest impact on the faith formation of your child. Each of us has been called to witness Christ's love for our children and each other.

During our time together, we will examine what it takes to live your faith day by day and practice those lifelong skills that lead to a richer spiritual life. May these blessings be a continuous faith journey guided by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus Christ.

Thank you for letting me direct your child's path towards the Sacrament of Confirmation. Together, we will all grow deeper in our faith.

Diana Zuna

Director of Religious Education

What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the strengthening and fullness of the Holy Spirit already received in Baptism.

When we were baptized, we became children of God. As children of God we share the life of God; the life of three persons in one love. The spirit is the love between Father and Son. The Spirit acts in us urging us to move beyond our individual selves into making the community on Earth like the community of love that is God. Confirmation calls us to a greater participation in the mission of Jesus and the Church. Through Confirmation our relationship with God is deepened and we are incorporated more completely into the body of Christ. Confirmation obliges us, as true witnesses of Christ, to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Our Goal is to form disciples by leading teens to:

- Develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ,
 - Experience the power of the Holy Spirit,
 - Awaken a sense of belonging to the Church,
- Encourage a sense of belonging by developing a fellowship among the youth of the parish.

Attending Mass as a Family

It is the parents' right and responsibility to transmit their faith on to their children. A serious commitment to faith formation is expected from all parents and children. Therefore, it is expected that all children enrolled in our CCD program and their families attend Mass every week. It is nearly impossible to expect a Religious Education Program to succeed if the central act of worship is ignored.

**Attendance at class and Mass is very important.
Religion Education Classes are NOT a substitute for Mass.**

Sunday Mass Attendance Log

Students are required to provide proof of attending Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Proof of attending Mass on Sunday is to keep a Sunday Mass Attendance Log by asking the celebrant priest to give you a sticker at the end of Mass. Alternative to the log is to bring to class a church bulletin signed by the celebrant from another Church.

Each Mass sticker/bulletin equals one point, students in the 8th grade class need **15 Mass** points in order to eligible to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Director/Catechists will check Mass points weekly, make sure your child brings his/her attendance log to class.

Students who fail to provide proof of Sunday Mass attendance will receive zero points and no other alternative assignment will make up this requirement.

Sunday Mass attendance log will be distributed at our Parent meeting.

Mass attendance log due: March 1 & 2.

Mass Times and Confessions

Saturday at: 4:30 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation at 3:30 PM to 4:15 PM

Sunday at:

8:00 AM

10:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Spanish Mass at 5:00 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation at 4:00 PM to 4:45 PM

Check bulletin for Mass times for holy days of obligation.

Confirmation Candidate Required Responsibilities

Based on the guidelines published by the Diocese of Trenton, the following requirements must be met by all candidates before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mark's Church.

All Candidates must assume the responsibility of completion of all parts of preparation and program obligations listed below.

- Attend Sunday Mass and pray daily. (15 Mass points)
- Attend ALL classes, Reconciliation services, and Commitment Mass.
- Provide a copy of the Baptism certificate.
- Know the teachings of the Catholic faith, the Church precepts, and formal prayers.
- Complete at least (20 or more) hours of Community Service.
- Complete all assignments, projects, and homework.
- Choose a Confirmation name and submit a Saint Report (500 research paper).
- Choose a Confirmation Sponsor using the guideline and criteria established below.
- Attend the Confirmation Retreat and Confirmation practice.
- Write a letter to Fr. Miguel indicating your readiness and desire to be confirmed.
- Participate in parish community life by volunteering for chosen parish ministry.
- Participate in at least 3 service projects, 1 mandatory sponsored by St. Mark's Church.
- Exhibit appropriate Christian behavior at all times.

Baptismal Certificates

The Religious Education Office MUST be provided with a copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate. If your child was baptized at St. Mark's Church, you do not need to provide the certificate, it is on record. If you provided us with a copy at the time of registration, please confirm that you handled one in by calling the Religious Education Office (732) 449-6364 ext. 105. After your child is confirmed, we will send a notice to the church where they were baptized so their Confirmation may also be recorded.

Important Dates and Information

- **Mass & Rite of Commitment: Sunday, October 5 at 12:00 p.m.**

At this time, the Candidates will present to the community their signed "Candidate Commitment Promise" to pray, study and attend Sunday Mass, as they begin their preparation for the reception of the sacrament. All Candidates and their parents are expected to attend this special rite.

- **Confirmation Bake Sale: November 22-23**

All Students are required to participate in one Mass.

- **Confirmation Paperwork Due: January 4 & 5**

All required paperwork should be enclosed in an envelope with the student's name on the front.

- **Mass Attendance Log Due: March 1 & 2**

Students in the 8th grade class need 15 Mass points to be eligible to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

- **Confirmation Retreat: Sunday, March 8 from 12:30- 3:30 p.m.**

All candidates and the Sponsor or (1) parent is required to attend. Failure to attend may result in not being confirmed. Make sure to reserve this date. Please check any conflicts and let us know. We can find an alternative if given enough notice, but it is one of the requirements that the Confirmandi attend a retreat prior to Confirmation. Thank you for your understanding. Please contact the office for more information. Light dinner will be served at 12:00 p.m.

- **Confirmation Practice: Tuesday, March 10 from 7:00- 8:30 p.m.**

All candidates and their sponsor are required to attend.

- **Confirmation Date: Friday, March 13 at 4:00 p.m.**

Rev. Msgr. Joseph N. Rosie, STL, EV. will be officiating. Please arrive by 3:15 p.m.

Class Expectations

- Students are expected to be on time and prepared for every session. Our time together is limited, and we hope to fill every minute to its fullest. Parents are responsible for ensuring students attend the classes on time and the child should be prepared. If for any reason you are unable to attend a class, please contact your catechist as soon as possible.
- Students are expected to contribute to the safe-space environment through their behavior and kind words. Our sessions together should inspire students to share and discuss. Creating a safe and spiritual environment is the key to our success. Should any situations arise, I will contact parents to best decide a plan for success. Creating a safe and welcoming environment is my priority.
- Attend weekly Mass. Sunday liturgy is the way to experience community, as well as deepen your faith and spirituality. As a candidate in the sacramental preparation program for Confirmation, you are required and expected to attend weekend liturgy.
- Attend Rite to Commitment. To involve the whole parish community in the journey of your Confirmation the Rite of Commitment will be celebrated at a weekend liturgy.

Dress Code for Confirmation Day

Confirmation is a very special and important occasion in our Christian life. Like all occasions which are significant, dressing appropriately enhances, honors and respects the occasion and the people present. Please use the following guidelines when selecting clothing.

GIRLS: Dress or skirt and blouse, and dress shoes. No bare shoulders, no flip flop shoes, or UGGs.

The appropriate length of the skirt or dress should fall between the knee and ankle. Skirts and dresses should be no more than three inches above the knee.

BOYS: Dress pants, shirt and tie. Dress shoes and socks. Sport coats are optional. No cargo pants and no sneakers.

SPONSORS: Please follow the above dress code.

At the Celebration of Confirmation, the dress of the candidates and sponsor should be suitable and modest for the occasion.

Confirmation Service Hours

Works of Mercy (Service Hours)

Each Confirmation candidate is strongly encouraged to perform Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy (Service) in the parish and/or community in response to our call to service as Catholics. Through serving others, we learn lessons and put our lives into perspective. The candidates have many talents and time that can be used to benefit those that are less fortunate.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

Providing Works of Mercy to Others

The concept of service is not just a Confirmation project, it is necessary to the life of the Church. During the time of Confirmation preparation, each student will have the opportunity to give some form of Christian witness and service. When giving service, the following points should be considered:

- Your service is not just a job well done. It is selflessly and lovingly helping those in need.
- You should reflect on how your service project is helping you take on the mind and heart of Christ, fulfill the needs of others, and build up the Christian community.

Confirmation candidates at St. Mark's must participate in a minimum of 20 or more hours of community service.

The giving of service should continue after Confirmation and all through the candidate's life.

Suggested Works of Mercy

The following is a suggested list of projects which would enable you to serve others, free of charge. You may work by yourself, or with others. **You may spend your time on several different activities and must participate in at least 3 different services sponsored by St. Mark's. All service projects letters must be signed and dated by a supervisor or person in charge. If a parent's is signing the form, parents must obtain a form/letter from organization.**

- Altar Server
- Assisting with Parish Activities
- Annual Bake Sale (winter)
- Catechist Assistant (Help during CCD classes)
- Caring Cooks, Ronald McDonald House, Long Branch, NJ (Prepare, bake and serve a meal)
- Coat Collection, Spanish Ministry (Sort coats for coat drive in November)
- Fulfill, Monmouth & Ocean County, Neptune, NJ (Stacking shelves, sorting food)
- Madonna House Neptune, NJ (organize and clean up)
- Sunnyside Manor Nursing Home, Manasquan, NJ (Activities for seniors)
- Trinity Church Soup Kitchen, Asbury Park, NJ (Set up, prepare and serve meals and clean up afterwards)
- Visiting nursing homes and hospitals
- Collecting food for the poor and delivering it
- Assisting in meal programs for the poor and elderly
- Build a house with Habitat for Humanity.
- Donate blankets to a homeless shelter.
- Teach computer skills at a senior center.
- Volunteer to tutor. Check with your guidance office to see if your school offers peer tutoring.
- Volunteer to coach or referee with a youth team.
- Volunteer to give music lessons to people in your community or perform at local shelters or senior organizations.
- Volunteer at any school related activities during the summer or school year.

Babysitting, doing chores at home, cleaning, raking leaves, etc. are NOT considered community service and will not be accepted as service projects.

St. Mark's will sponsor some of those projects mentioned above

Sponsor Requirements

The sponsor is an invaluable assistant to parents in transmitting faith. The sponsor needs to be able to fulfill several requirements:

The Church requires that the sponsor be an active, practicing Catholic who has already celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Church recognizes that a person cannot transmit what the person does not have.

- It is important that the sponsor be more mature, more informed, and more experienced in the ways of our faith and culture than the candidate is.
- It is recommended that the sponsor be an older person who has some experience with his or her faith and therefore a clearer perspective from which to speak.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to meet with the candidate on a regular basis prior to the celebration of Confirmation and to make a commitment to continue the faith journey after the celebration.
- The sponsor is one who is willing to share his or her faith with the candidate.
- The sponsor is an assistant to the parents as the prime transmitter of faith.
- The sponsor is to be a person of strong and committed personal faith.
- The sponsor needs to be an open, honest, caring, committed and encouraging person who will help the candidate grow in his/her understanding of the faith as the young person comes to a deeper appreciation of God in his/her life.

Important information about Sponsors

The candidates in consultation with their parents, choose a sponsor. The role of the sponsor is an important one. A sponsor must be a person who knows the candidate, who is willing to share his/her own faith, and who can be of help to the candidate on this spiritual journey to Confirmation.

The sponsor must be a companion on the journey of faith. He or she is present as a friend, specifically a Christian friend. Just as friends do things together, share themselves and their resources, support and encourage each other, so do sponsors in the area of Christian and Church life. Sponsors are there when needed: to affirm, teach, advice, console, strengthen, and guide. They personally introduce the candidate to the Church.

Requirements: (According to Church Canon Law and Diocesan mandates)

- Sponsor must be 16 years of age and fully initiated in the Catholic Church.
- Sponsor must belong to the Catholic Church and have received the three sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.
- Sponsor, if married, it must be in valid Catholic marriage. In all cases, the sponsor's living situation should be in conformity with Catholic morality.
- Sponsor may be the same person the Candidate had as a Godparent for Baptism, or a new sponsor selected specifically for Confirmation.
- Sponsor may be either male or female for any Candidate.
- **Sponsor may not be a parent or stepparent.**

Please note that no one can be a sponsor without meeting the above requirements

If the sponsor is a member of St. Mark's Church, please fill in the sponsor's information on the candidate's information form. In this case, your sponsor does not need to obtain a separate sponsor eligibility form. We will confirm the eligibility requirements in our parish office.

If the sponsor is not a member of St. Mark's Church, your sponsor must obtain a sponsor eligibility certificate from his/her parish and attach it directly to the sponsor eligibility form. Be sure to add the Confirmation candidate's name to the certificate. If time is of the essence, your sponsor may mail this form directly to us at:

St. Mark's Church
Office of Religious Education
215 Crescent Parkway
Sea Girt, NJ 08750

Sponsor Instructions – Love Letter

(Please give/forward to your child’s Sponsor)

Dear Sponsor,

We would like to surprise each candidate on Confirmation Day with a “**Love Letter**” of encouragement from you, their sponsor. As their sponsor, you are a model and inspiration to the child who has chosen you as the sponsor. Your message, if written from the heart, can have a great impact on the life of the candidate.

Here are a few topic suggestions for your letter:

- Your pride in the candidate for his/her preparation for Confirmation – the extra study effort, their service, and attention to prayer.
- How special/unique the candidate is and why. How he/she has brought love and joy to the family and others.
- Encourage the candidate to come to you in times of pain, discouragement, failure. Speak about these times in your own life.
- Encourage the candidate to always strive to grow in his/her relationship with God and to live a moral, responsible life as a fully initiated Catholic.
- Describe how the Holy Spirit has touched *your* life.

Please place your letter in a sealed envelope marked with the **candidate’s first and last name**.

**PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON THE LEFT-TOP CORNER OF THE ENVELOPE
CONTAINING YOUR “LOVE LETTER.”**

**The letters from Sponsors should be included as part of the Confirmation packet to be handed in by the candidate you are sponsoring. The packet, (which includes your enclosed “Love Letter”)
Due: January 4-5, 2026.**

Thank you for your assistance in making your candidate’s Confirmation Day both a spiritual and memorable experience.

Sincerely,
Diana Zuna
Director of Religious Education
diana@stmarkseagirt.com
(732) 449-6364 ext. 105

CONFIRMATION SAINT RESEARCH PAPER

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS- RESEARCH PAPERS THAT DO NOT MEET ALL REQUIREMENTS WILL NEED TO BE RE-DONE

Confirmation is a special gift of Christ through the Church, designed to empower us to better live out the Gospel call to each one of us. Part of that calling is to recognize ourselves as members of Christ's Body the Church, and to live that out, as we were created to do. Fundamentally, we were created to be saints! For this reason, the Church has urged that we embrace a Confirmation saint to be a guide and intercessor on our life's journey to heaven.

This saint can be someone whose life and/or teaching you look up to or embrace. Perhaps the saint shares a common interest or passion that you do. Perhaps instead, that saint shares a trait or patronage that you desire for your own life; you may wish to humbly ask their intercession for that particular trait or virtue. Choosing a Confirmation saint is an important aspect of the experience of preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is important to understand the life of that particular saint during these preparation months.

Explanation: For Confirmation, each student candidate must choose a Confirmation name. Candidates may use their baptismal name or can choose the name of a canonized saint. The saint should hold personal significance for the student. The student should strive to be more like the saint in his/her qualities or the way the saint followed God.

Research Paper: Find out more about your saint's life, and write: **MLA format, word cited, 500–600-word research paper** about this Saint whose name you have chosen for your Confirmation name. **Include your first and last name on paper.**

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

(12-point font, double space, margins one inch, top, bottom, and sides)

Paragraph 1: 5-10 sentences. Briefly introduce the points you will begin to discuss in your paper (reasons you chose your saint to be your Confirmation Name). You may also include the reason students choose Saints names for Confirmation in this paragraph (We choose saints names so each person has a strong, Catholic example to follow...)

Paragraph 2: 5-10 sentences. Summarize the basic events of your saint's life, from beginning to end. In this paragraph, you may want to include the time period in which the saint lived, basic facts about the saint's life, interesting obstacles or struggles the saint had to overcome, stories about their conversion to Catholicism (if this applies), etc.

Paragraph 3: 5-10 sentences. Summarize the accomplishments of this saint and what the saint is known for (many saints are Patron Saints: For example, St. Gabriel the Archangel is the Patron Saint of Communication, St. Cecilia is the Patron Saint of Music, etc.) You may also include miracles the saints have performed or interesting facts about your saint in this paragraph.

Paragraph 4: 5-10 sentences. Explain the reason you chose this saint to be your inspiration for Confirmation (What qualities about this saint do you admire? What makes you want to be like this saint? Etc.) Explain how you will try to be like this saint as you prepare for Confirmation. Also, explain how you will continue to try to be like this saint after you are confirmed. (For example, Saint Peter showed great obedience to God and he was trusted to lead the Catholic Church. If St. Peter is your saint, you may want to have God trust you with the Faith just as God trusted Peter)

Paragraph 5 5-10 sentences. Sum up your points in your paper and wrap it up! (Conclusion) You may also include in this paragraph personal growth you may have experienced in researching this saint.

Word cited: list of all sources directly referenced in a research paper, typically formatted according to MLA style.

Research (at your local library, the church library or on the Internet) may be necessary to be able to fulfill the requirements for your paper. If you choose to use the Internet as a source, please make sure you choose sites that have factual information. Remember that many Internet sites are not reliable; Wikipedia is not a Catholic site. You might want to try AmericanCatholic.org & Catholic.org or other approved Catholic Websites.



Student's Name & Last

Confirmation Class 2026

Date (when paper was written)

Saint Maria Goretti

St. Maria Goretti was born October 16, 1890, in Corinaldo, Italy. Her father, who worked on a farm, moved the family to Ferriere di Conca. When Maria's father died of malaria, her mother took charge of the household. Even through tough times, Maria always loved God and served him. Her mom had a struggle feeding her children once her father died. She is one of the youngest canonized Saints. Before Maria's farmworker father died, he moved his whole family to Ferriere di Conca, near Anzio.....

Letter to Father Miguel

- Introduce yourself and tell Father Miguel about your family, yourself, and your interests.
- What is your Confirmation name? Why did you choose this name?
- Who is your sponsor? Why did you choose your sponsor? Why do you think your sponsor is worthy to help you before and after you receive the sacrament of Confirmation?
- Which gift of the Holy Spirit is most helpful to you at this time?
- Why should Father Miguel make a recommendation to Bishop O'Connell that you be confirmed?
- How do you plan to remain involved with the church after Confirmation?
- What types of Works of Mercy did you perform *and* a description of how the service affected the candidate?

CANDIDATE'S APPLICATION
FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Please type or print:

Name of Candidate: _____

Place of Birth: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Cell phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Saint Name Chosen: _____ Candidate's Height (for gown size) _____ feet

Sponsor's Name: _____

Sponsor's Home Parish: _____

Sponsor's Parish Address: _____

Is Sponsor 16 yrs. of Age or Older? _____

RECORD OF BAPTISM

Church of Baptism: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Date of Baptism: _____

Godparents: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Name _____ Maiden Name _____

- If the candidate did not receive the Sacrament of Baptism here at St. Mark's, please attach a copy of the Baptismal Certificate (*not* the original) to this form.
- If the candidate was baptized here at St. Mark's, please complete the following information only:

My child was baptized at St. Mark's on: _____

My child received First Holy Communion at St. Mark's on: _____

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR ELIGIBILITY FORM

If Sponsor is registered at St. Mark's, please fill out this top portion of this form. No parish seal or Father Miguel's signature is required.

I accept the role of Confirmation Sponsor for:

CANDIDATE'S NAME: _____

I understand the responsibility I undertake, both to serve as a model of Christian living and to pray for my candidate. I attest that the information provided on this form is true. I am a practicing Catholic; I believe and accept the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

(Please print information)

SPONSOR'S NAME _____ Age: _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

SIGNATURE OF SPONSOR: _____ Date: _____

If Sponsor is registered in ANOTHER parish, please ask their parish Priest to sign this form and place parish seal.

Also, a sponsorship letter from their parish can replace this form.

THIS FORM CERTIFIES THAT (SPONSOR NAME) _____
IS A REGISTERED MEMBER OF OUR PARISH, AND TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, IS A QUALIFIED
MEMBER TO SERVE AS A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR.

PRIEST'S SIGNATURE _____

PARISH _____

ADDRESS _____

SIGNATURE OF SPONSOR: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to St. Mark's Religious Education Office, 215 Crescent Parkway, Sea Girt, NJ 08750.

PARISH SEAL

PARENT/CANDIDATE CHECK OFF LIST:



First:

- Mark your calendar with all important dates
- Make a copy of all important information for your records

Did you:

- Read the Confirmation Handbook
- Complete the “Confirmation Application Form”
Include all pertinent information – include height of candidate for robe size
- Attach copy of Baptismal Certificate – if candidate was not baptized at St. Mark’s Church or if not previously summited.
- Complete the “Sponsor Information Form”
- Attach the “Sponsor Eligibility Form”
- Complete the “Confirmation Saint Research Paper”
- Complete “ Letter to Father Miguel”
- Complete “Description of Works of Mercy”- 20 or more hours
- Complete “Mass Attendance” 15 or more

**ALL THE INFORMATION ABOVE SHOULD BE ENCLOSED IN AN ENVELOPE
& RETURNED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 4 & 5, 2026.**

Religious Education Office
St. Mark’s Church
215 Crescent Parkway
Sea Girt, NJ 08750
Att: Diana Zuna

You’re done!!