

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church

Confirmation Prep

Parent Handbook – Year 1



*“We must be living witnesses of the beauty
and grandeur of Christianity.”*

-St. Gianna Molla

Dear Parents,

To start, I want to acknowledge and thank you for all that you do as the parents of your children. Your child would not be where they are today if it were not for your love and support. Thank you!

As parents, your role in Confirmation prep is central. When your child was born, and you received the incredible role of being a parent, you also became your child's first catechist. You are their first teacher of our Catholic faith. You have taught them through your example and by sharing all the knowledge you have attained over your years of being a Catholic. Over the next eight months, your encouragement, support, and prayers will be vital to the impact Confirmation prep has on your child.

Although I am not a parent yet, I know how much of an influence my own parents have on my faith. If it were not for their teaching, encouragement, and prayers I would not have the faith I have today. My parents taught me the importance of praying daily, attending Mass every Sunday, and going to confession frequently. They constantly encouraged me to attend youth group and other events offered at our parish for youth. In college, they were there to support me as I pursued a degree in Catholic Studies. However, I think it is their witness that has the greatest influence on me. Both are fervent in their prayer and are not afraid to admit that they rely completely on Christ. My parents are nowhere near perfect. I have seen my parents fall, but I have also seen them reach out for Christ and stand back up.

Over the next eight months, pray for your child. Many of you may be doing this already, but pray specifically that your child's heart may be opened to the love of Christ. Pray that they invite Him into their lives. After Confirmation classes, encourage them to share what they learned or discussed in class. Support and guide your child through the different requirements of Confirmation prep.

I am looking forward to getting to know your children and hopefully all of you better throughout this year. Hopefully, the student and parent handbooks answer most of your questions, but please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any other questions you may have.

In Christ,

Mariah Smith

2017-2018 Confirmation Year 1 Schedule

Sundays 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

September 17th – Orientation (7PM)

September 24th

October 1st – Due: Statement of Intent and Ministry Selection

October 7th: Mothers' Retreat (1PM-4PM)

October 8th

October 15th

October 22nd: No Class – MEA

October 29th

November 11th: Fathers' Retreat (1PM-4PM)

November 5th

November 12th

November 19th

November 26th: No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!

November 26th: Confirmation Retreat Option #1 (11AM – 5PM)

December 3rd

December 10th

December 17th

December 24th: No Class – Merry Christmas!

December 31st: No Class – Happy New Year!

January 7th – Due: Sponsor Form

January 14th

January 21st

January 28th

February 4th: No Class – Super Bowl Sunday!

February 11th

February 18th

February 25th – Guest Speaker: Pat Millae (One parent is asked to attend with student.)

March 2nd: Confirmation Retreat Option #2 (3PM – 9PM)

March 4th – Due: Saint Report

March 11th: No Class - Spring Break

March 18th: No Class - Spring Break

March 25th – Interview must be completed or scheduled.

April 1st: No Class - Happy Easter!

April 8th

April 15th

April 22nd

April 29th – Due from Parents: Letters of Support

May 6th – No Class for Year 1

May 13th: No Class - Happy Mother's Day!

May 20th: Final Class

May 21st: Confirmation Ceremony at 7 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Paul

For the Parents

Mothers' Retreat – Saturday, October 7th: 1PM-4PM

Fathers' Retreat – Saturday, November 11th: 1PM-4PM

Disclaimer: These are **not** instructional retreats on how to be good moms and dads.

So often as adults, and especially for you parents, life can be so busy and hectic that we aren't able to take the time to really focus on our own spiritual well-being. This retreat is an opportunity for all of the wonderful mothers and fathers in our parish to take a step back from life and be spiritually fed.

This retreat will include talks, discussion, and, of course, quality time with our Lord. If you have any questions, please contact Mariah Smith: msmith@seasparish.org.

This retreat is required for all moms and dads with children in Confirmation, but is open to all moms and dads at SEAS.

Letters of Support/Palanca Letters

Our final class will be a night of reflection and prayer. There is a tradition that before candidates are confirmed, they receive letters of support and congratulations from their parents, other family, friends, and mentors. Sometimes, these letters are called *Palanca* letters. The word *Palanca* is Spanish for “lever”. Just as a lever enables a person to move something which is beyond normal strength, so the *Palanca* letters are meant to show the candidate that they are not alone in this. They have the support of their loved ones and God. My own parish did this when I was going through Confirmation prep, and I will never forget how shocked and overwhelmed I was at the amount of letters my parents gathered together for me. I still have every single one of those letters, and it is always a joy to go back and read them.

Letters are often a surprise for the candidates, so mum's the word!

Palanca Letter Instructions

Due: April 29, 2018

Please collect all of the letters for your child before submitting them. Place all letters in a manila envelope and clearly mark on it your child's name. You may either bring your manila envelope to the parish office or mail it to the following address:

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
Attn. Mariah Smith
2035 15th St. W
Hastings, MN 55033

Writing Tips:

As you sit down and write your letter, **keep these tips in mind:**

- First things first: say a quiet prayer to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you say what He wants you to say.
- Simple, genuine encouragement is best. Even brevity is not a bad thing! Don't pressure yourself to write "deep" or "profound" thoughts. The best that you can give is to share what the mercy and love of Christ has done for you, and to share this in love.
- Don't preach! The good news is that this burden is not on you. Just encourage, build up, affirm, and express confidence in the plans God has for this young man or woman.
- Share a quote or prayer. There are so many powerful and comforting words from the Bible and from the many saints of the Church. These can be found digging through your Bible or sometimes I just use Google or Pinterest.
- Assure the recipient of your prayers.

Palanca Letter Example:

Dear John Doe,

First, I want to tell you how proud I am of the time and effort you have put into your Confirmation prep. I know it has not always been easy to make time for it, but I am so excited for you to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

God blessed me when He put you in my life, and I thank Him every day for that. Your kindness to others, your confidence, and your strength are such a joy to see and are truly

inspiring. The Lord has given you the ability to walk into a room and lift everyone's spirits just by being there.

When I think of you, I cannot help but think that God must have quite a plan in mind for you. He has created every single one of us for a purpose. He does not create anything without a purpose. He knew that the world would need you, and so you came to be. Do not ever doubt God's love for you or be afraid to do His will. As Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for your woe, plans to give you hope and a future."

Confirmation is such a gift because it gives us the graces we need to be strong in our faith. If you open your heart, the Holy Spirit will come upon you on the day of your Confirmation and will bless you with so many gifts. Gifts that are going to help you serve God and do His will. They are gifts that will help you love the people in your life as God loves them. These gifts will help you live and defend your faith.

Trust in the Lord and know that He has put many people in your life to love and support you, myself being one of them. You are a good, strong young man. You are capable of so much! Just remember the words of St. John Paul II, "Be not afraid!"

With love and prayers,

Jane Doe

