



Our Lady of Consolation Faith Formation

4865 11 Mile Road, Rockford, MI, 49341

(616) 866-2577

Dear Parents,

August 2011

'Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For '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. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.' (CCC 1326)

With that thought in mind, I am formally writing you, parents of age appropriate children, an invitation to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with your child. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, a person celebrates the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and a renewed commitment to his/her belief in the Catholic Church. We strongly believe that Confirmation is a journey into an ever-growing, ever-maturing faith, not the end of religious formation. The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation makes present the same grace that was showered upon the Apostles fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ and completes the process of Christian Initiation. The reception of this sacrament is an indispensable moment in the life of all Catholics, and its celebration is of vital importance for the Church

The various stages of our life adolescence (widely know as "the teenage years") can be a time of confusion and conflict. During this time of life young people experience both physical and emotional changes and begin to learn the real nature of individual responsibility. Given the challenge this time of life presents for our young people, there is no more appropriate time for them to take another step forward in their relationship with God so that they can draw on God's love, strength, wisdom and courage. They are now at an age when they are invited to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation

No doubt, your support and guidance means a lot to your son/daughter as she or he makes a personal decision to accept, profess and live the faith you planted in them at the time of Baptism. But it needs to be clearly understood that receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation must be their personal decision. It is not something they must do because "the family" expects it of them. Furthermore, the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation should not be viewed as a "spiritual graduation" from faith formation, a "group" activity that all ninth graders must do together. It is a personal step that each individual must take when they feel they are ready to make a deeper commitment to their faith. If your youth wants to take this important step in their life of faith, we, the pastor and Confirmation Coordinator at Our Lady of Consolation Parish, pledge our support and help in preparing them for the celebration of Confirmation.

For the youth who attend Our Lady of Consolation Faith Formation, Our Lady of Consolation School, or are parishioners of Our Lady of Consolation provided preparation includes of a series of Youth/Parent(s) and Youth/Sponsor sessions engaging and exploring the elements of the Sacrament of Confirmation. **These sessions begin in the winter of a youth's eighth grade year, January 2012 (see calendar enclosed).** If your son/daughter is unable to attend the required meetings or complete the required work, they will be invited the following year to participate in the Confirmation preparation program. We will also be providing you with some material to use in working with your child at home in preparation for the Sacrament. We ask you to ensure that your son or daughter makes a commitment both to attend all of the sessions at the Parish and to complete the at home assignments. Your son/daughter's readiness for this Sacrament will be based on the priority you and they put into preparation. To fail to prepare deprives no one but your youth. Opportunities are provided throughout the year for the youth, their families and sponsors to journey together as they prepare to celebrate the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Confirmation candidates are also **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to register for and classes in August and regularly participate in Middle School Faith Formation by joining us for **Urgency** on Sunday nights or **Edge** on Wednesday nights.

Your son/daughter will need to choose a sponsor. The sponsor at Confirmation acts as a witness to the reception of this Sacrament and encourages the candidate to live their commitment as a Catholic to its fullest. It is advised that sponsors be the same person that was present at Baptism. But that isn't practical in our society of today. So when choosing a sponsor that person must be a 16 year old Confirmed, Practicing Catholic. (Please read "Sponsor Requirements" – included in this packet of information.)

Most sessions will begin after the 11am mass, approximately at 12:15pm. The actual date for the celebration of the Sacrament is not yet established. Bishop Walter Hurley, Bishop of this Diocese, will be celebrating the Sacrament at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew next fall and we are awaiting the confirmation from his office of the date when our parish is invited. I expect that this date won't be determined until next summer. **When choosing a sponsor who lives out of town, please keep in mind that the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation could take place during a week day.** If a sponsor is not able to attend all preparation sessions or the actual celebration of Confirmation, parents may act as a proxy.

If you feel your youth is ready to make a personal choice to be confirmed at this time in their life and you are willing to accompany him/her on their faith journey, **please ensure that your son/daughter completes the registration form and brings it with them to the first meeting in January.**

We appreciate all your efforts to make this a truly meaningful process for your son/daughter. If you have any questions don't hesitate to call the Faith Formation Office or email Amy Pereira at apereira@olcparish.net.

In Christ,

Amy Pereira,
Co-Coordinator of Middle School Faith Formation
Our Lady of Consolation – Rockford, MI

*The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are:
Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord*