

# SC Chapel

## Youth Ministry and Confirmation Handbook

### General Information

Welcome to the Santa Clara Chapel Youth Ministry & Confirmation Programs! We are so happy you are with us and that you want to take your faith, and your son's/daughter's faith to a deeper level.

Here at Santa Clara Chapel, we are proud to be using Life Teen & Edge Youth Ministries to reach out to our teens grades 6-12, as well as Matthew Kelley's "Decision Point" series for our Confirmation Year 2 students.

### THE PROGRAMS

**Youth Ministry (grades 6-12)** - To take our youth to a deeper level and help them to have a personal experience with Jesus Christ, we use the materials from Life Teen, Inc. These materials include curriculum for Life Nights (High School) and Edge Nights (Middle School), training for our Core Team, bible study guides, retreat plans, videos, etc.

How it works: Life Teen and Edge resources are used in over 1,800 parishes around the world, and continually growing. The culture in which we all minister is not static, which is why Edge and Life Teen resources are released three times per year in Support boxes (both online and physical shipments). This allows us to respond to current culture trends our youth are faced with.

Life Teen, Inc. resources are consistently loyal to the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, following the lead of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Each semester (3 months) is designed to have two catechetical nights per month, one issue night per month, and one social night per month. Each semester covers topics from the Catechism, Scripture and the Magisterium.

Edge Nights are slightly different in that they are designed for a four-year period. Over the course of four years, a Middle School teen going through the Edge program will encounter and learn the entire Catechism. This compliments anything they're already getting through religious education classes.

Each Edge and Life Night begins with the "Gather." This is a time of social interaction, usually in the form of a game, accompanied by a time of prayer. The "Proclaim" of the night comes next, usually a talk or reflection. The "Break" is next, typically small groups with a time of personal reflection. The "Send" of the evening closes everything with a prayer and/or a song. Then it's clean-up and time to go home!

(Confirmation 1 students are required to attend at least 20 Life Nights for their formation. See below for more information.)

**Confirmation** – This is a time for deep prayer and joy as a parent, sponsor and candidate! Confirmation preparation is a process in Christian growth where teens are beginning to establish a personal faith identity. Through sharing their own journey and interaction with others, the candidates are assisted in identifying and understanding how God is working in their lives, and come to a new realization of faith within the context of the parish community.

The goal of the Confirmation Preparation Process is to prepare the high school-aged youth to receive the sacrament and to deepen the faith of the parish community. This process is grounded in a vision of youth ministry in which the parish community responds to the needs of the youth and encourages them to return to share their unique gifts with the parish community (A Vision of Youth Ministry, USCC, 1976).

In addition to pairing up with Life Nights, we are pleased to be using Matthew Kelley's "Decision Point" series. This is a program that has been around for only a short while, but it has made a lasting impact on the teens who have gone through its program.

Decision Point is designed to not only prepare young Catholics for the Sacrament of Confirmation in a dynamic way, but also teach and inspire them to respond and cooperate with God's grace in all the circumstance of their daily lives, long after their Confirmation has passed.

## Confirmation Curriculum

**YEAR 1:** What we've decided to do this year is slightly different from past years. We are removing the classroom setting for Confirmation Year 1, and instead replacing it with the following requirements:

- 1) Letter to the Pastor
- 2) attend at least 20 Life Nights for the year
- 3) perform service hours – Church (10), Community (5), and Home (5) (see below for more information)
- 4) interview w/ Confirmation Coordinator (Mrs. Parks) (Recommended: Mondays between 4:30-6:30p.m. – please set appointment)
- 5) attend weekly Sunday mass and frequent reconciliation (monthly is recommended!)
- 6) choose a sponsor and a confirmation name (by Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>)
- 7) candidates and sponsors to attend ALL Candidate-Sponsor Meetings (4 total) Parents are encouraged, but not required to attend; some rituals will be performed on these nights
- 8) perform rituals:
  - "Beginning the Journey" (November 9<sup>th</sup> Candidate-Sponsor Mtg);
  - "Ritual of Promise" (at Mass Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>);
  - "Covenant Call to Conversion" (March 29<sup>th</sup> Candidate-Sponsor Mtg);
  - "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" (January 18<sup>th</sup> Candidate-Sponsor Mtg; Night with the Pastor)
  - Handouts provided prior to event
- 9) Submit copy of Baptismal Certificate and copy of Holy Communion certificate; pay any outstanding fees

**By expressing the desire to be confirmed, candidates and their parents and sponsors are committing to the above requirements.** Should a candidate not complete the requirements stated above, he/she will not meet the requirement for Year 1, and thus will need to repeat Year 1. Being more than 15 minutes late to any Life Night will not count as attending.

**YEAR 2:** Congratulations, you're half-way there! The following requirements are expected for all Year 2 Candidates.

- 1) attend bi-weekly Wednesday night classes (Decision Point) starting in late September
- 2) perform service hours – Church (10), Community (5), and Home (5) (see below for more information)
- 3) interview w/ Confirmation Coordinator (Mrs. Parks) (Recommended: Mondays between 4:30-6:30p.m. – please set appointment)
- 4) attend weekly Sunday mass and frequent reconciliation (monthly is recommended!)
- 5) attend Confirmation Retreat (TBA)
- 6) candidates and sponsors to attend ALL Candidate-Sponsor Meetings (4 total) (Parents are strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend)
- 7) perform rituals:
  - "Blessing of Sponsors and Candidates" (November 9th Candidate-Sponsor Mtg);
  - "Commitment of the Journey" (at Mass – January 22);
  - "Ritual of Affirming Candidates" (at Mass – March 5<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent))
  - As many of these rituals are new to the program, Year 2 students will join Year 1 in performing their rituals on the assigned evenings in addition to performing their own rituals. Handouts will be provided prior to events.
- 8) pay any outstanding fees

**By expressing the desire to be confirmed, candidates and their parents and sponsors are committing to the above requirements.** Should a candidate not complete the requirements stated above, he/she will not meet the requirement for Year 2, and thus will need to repeat Year 2. Being more than 15 minutes late to any Decision Point class will count as one absence. Having more than 2 absences total for the year (regardless of reason) will result in the candidate repeating Year 2.

## LETTER TO THE PASTOR

All Confirmation Year 1 candidates are expected to write a letter to the pastor of the parish. This letter should include:

1. Information about yourself: age, school you attend, grade, how long you have been a member of the parish, and how your parents feel about your getting confirmed.
2. A statement of intention: telling the pastor why you want to be confirmed and the people and events in your life that led up to this decision.
3. What does being a Roman Catholic mean to you?
4. How do you plan to participate actively in the life of the Church during the two years that you will be in the Confirmation program and as a confirmed Catholic after you have received the sacrament?

Letters are expected to be completed by December 1st, when they will be delivered to the pastor.

## ATTEND 20 LIFE NIGHTS

Each Year 1 candidate must attend at minimum 20 Life Nights for the year. There will be a sign-in sheet for the candidate at the beginning of each Life Night. Life Nights for the 2016-2017 school year will be on Thursdays from 6:30p.m. to 8p.m. These nights are open to ALL high school youth. However, should the candidate be more than 15 minutes late, their attendance will not be counted.

## SERVICE HOURS

Each Confirmation Candidate is required to perform the following in service hours:

- 1) \*Church – 10 hours
- 2) \*Community – 5 hours
- 3) \*Home – 5 hours

\*These hours look great on a resume and help with scholarship applications!

Here are some ideas:

**Church** – serve at mass as a lector, usher, musician, altar server. Father Marco would like to see help in the parking lot following Sunday masses, helping to direct traffic out of the parking lot. You could also help with Summer Fiesta. Ask Mrs. Parks for other opportunities to volunteer: such as working a table after masses and handing out flyers to age-appropriate youth not yet attending youth group, selling donuts after mass, being a peer leader with Teens for Christ and/or volunteering at youth nights.

**Community** – go to nursing homes, visit the sick, clean trash off the highways, volunteer at homeless shelters or hospitals. Catholic Charities. Could be something related to school. The

point is to perform the divine works of mercy here. If you need help with what those are – homework! :)

**Home** - hours here must be spent voluntarily. The key here is to do something that has not been asked or required of you. Normal chores do NOT count. A parent or guardian over 18 yrs of age must be able to vouch for you.

**Upon finishing a service project**, make sure to fill out the appropriate "Confirmation Service Project Report," have an adult who supervised sign it, and hand it in to your confirmation teacher or the Confirmation Coordinator - Mrs. Parks. ALL SERVICE HOURS MUST BE SUPERVISED BY AN ADULT. You want this – they vouch for your hours and tell us you weren't just goofing off for that period.

**All Year 1 and Year 2 Confirmation Candidates have the opportunity to earn service hours by being a part of our new leadership team Teens for Christ.**

**Teens For Christ** is a ministry here at Santa Clara Chapel focused on leading teens closer to Christ. It is in response to your Baptism, that all are called to serve Christ in one way or another. TFC Leadership Team is one of the ways you can serve Him here at our parish. TFC Team plans and leads the many apostolates we have for Middle and High School youth in our parish. For more information and for applying see our webpage: <http://santaclarachurch.weebly.com/youth-ministry.html>

## **PERSONAL INTERVIEWS**

All candidates are expected to make an appointment with, and be interviewed by, Mrs. Parks. Year 1 students have until the end of May to interview. Year 2 students must complete their interview by the end of February. To help meet this requirement, Mrs. Parks has set aside every Monday from 4:30-6:30p.m. Please call, text or email to set up an appointment. Other hours may be available upon request. Expect the interview to be about 20 minutes. A handout with questions is provided in your Confirmation Prep Packet.

## **ATTEND WEEKLY SUNDAY MASS AND FREQUENT RECONCILIATION**

We're all sinners and in need of God's saving grace. Weekly Sunday mass is not only a way to receive forgiveness for all our venial sins, it happens to be a requirement by the Catholic Church! To not attend Sunday mass when you are capable is to commit a mortal sin. Reception of the Eucharist is also required at least once a year at Easter. Reconciliation is recommended frequently during this time of preparation. We recommend once a month, but you need to go at least once a year.

There will be a form provided in the Confirmation Prep Packet. Each time you go to Mass, you will need to write down on this form when and where you attended. It is an offer of Good Will on your part to be honest on this form. God is watching!! 😊

## DOCUMENTS

Please make sure you have paid the appropriate fees and submitted copies of your baptismal certificate and 1<sup>st</sup> communion certificate.

## CHOOSE A CONFIRMATION NAME

Each candidate will choose a name for confirmation. This name symbolizes the dramatic change which takes place on your soul through the sacrament. The candidate may choose a Christian name (a biblical name or the name of a saint). His or her choice must be submitted to Mrs. Parks by November 9th. See the Class Saint Report in the Confirmation Prep Packet.

## CHOOSE A SPONSOR

Chosen by the confirmation candidate, this person should be someone who is actively living out their Catholic Christian values, is a practicing Catholic who is confirmed and in good standing with the Church. This person is vital to the candidate's spiritual journey. They are like godparents who watch over the candidate in his or her progression towards development beyond Confirmation. Ideally, it is the candidate's godparent, as it should be someone who is a friend and can serve as mentor, guide, confidant and listener. Regardless, he/she is someone who will continue to journey with the Candidate after Confirmation. All sponsors will need their pastor to vouch that they meet the criteria above. See the form labeled "Santa Clara Chapel Confirmation Program Sponsor Certificate." Sponsor must be chosen by Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>.

## CANDIDATE/SPONSOR MEETINGS

There are four assigned meetings for the 2016-2017 school year. All candidates and sponsors are expected to be at these meetings. Your time will be respected. **If you do not show and do not communicate the reason for your absence**, it will send the message that you are not taking the sacrament seriously and will delay your confirmation. **If the sponsor does not show**, it will send the message that he/she does not take their role as sponsor seriously; the candidate will be asked to choose someone else for his/her sponsor. Sending someone as proxy is acceptable, but should be communicated.

During some of our Candidate-Sponsor Meetings we will be performing important rituals, which is why it is necessary for the sponsor and candidate to be present. We encourage parents to attend, as these nights are valuable and important to the candidate's formation.

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## Supply List

Confirmation Year 1 – Not applicable

Confirmation Year 2 – bible, journal, Decision Point book (provided), pen/pencil

Please note: supplies may be provided for those in dire need.

## **FEES:**

**Youth Ministry - \$15 per person/yr**

**Confirmation Year 1 - \$50 (Youth Group fee is waived)**

**Confirmation Year 2 - \$80**

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## **Confirmation Checklist:**

- Candidate's Letter to the Pastor
- Sponsor has been chosen
- Sponsor Form filled out, stamped with his/her parish seal
- Candidate's choice of Confirmation Saint name
- 20 Service Hours: Church – 10, Community – 5, Home – 5
- Regular Sunday Mass attendance
- Regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Communion
- All your fees are paid.
- Baptismal Certificate and Holy Communion Certificate submitted



## **DRESS GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH NIGHTS AND CONFIRMATION CLASSES**

### **#1 Rule – dress appropriate to the night!**

Youth Nights: We recommend long shorts or pants/jeans; skirts can be dangerous with some of the games we play! So can low-cut shirts! No tummies showing. Smiling is only allowed from your face. Be aware of the shoes you're wearing – high heels and flip flops can also be dangerous!

Absolutely NO gang wear, shirts with profanity or shirts that degrade a person's dignity.

### **#2 Rule – use your grandma.**

If you wouldn't wear it in front of your grandma, you shouldn't be wearing it! (if Jesus works more for you – use Him!)

### **PROPER DRESS CODE FOR MASS**

Long pants, skirts/dresses should come to the knee or longer, sleeved shirts/blouses/dresses should fully cover the shoulders, necklines to be no more than five fingers from collar bone, no hats, dress shoes (Converse shoes are not dress shoes.)

**\*\*\*\*CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES:** You are expected to follow these guidelines. Should you show up inappropriately dressed on Confirmation Day we will supply you with a red robe to wear for the ceremony. These are very warm and cumbersome to wear and you will stand out from everyone else. We recommend dressing appropriately.\*\*\*\*\*

**Need help with the dress code? Schedule a shopping day with your personal stylist, Mrs. Parks! :)**