



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

"MY IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH."

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Dear parents/guardians with students in grade seven,

We are excited to accompany you in your child's faith journey as we prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation this coming year. What a great gift this Sacrament is! In the Diocese of Hamilton, grade seven is the year when young people are usually invited to prepare for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We unite with you in wanting the very best and God's greatest blessings for your child. Together, as home, school and parish, we can help our children to have a wonderful and meaningful experience as they prepare for this beautiful Sacrament. This year in our region, the Bishop has delegated pastors of parishes to celebrate Confirmation.

As your child prepares to encounter the Holy Spirit who is waiting to bestow upon them His sevenfold gifts, our good and loving God calls you as a family to share this amazing journey of faith. As you remember, this journey of faith began for your child the day on which you brought your precious child for baptism. This journey continued as you arranged for them to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. Now, this journey continues as these children receive their final Sacrament of Initiation, that of Confirmation.

To assist you in preparing for the celebration of Confirmation, you're invited to visit our parish website www.ihmchurch.ca. There, you can click on the "Parish Info" tab, where you will be able to register for Formed.org, (type "Stoney Creek" and parish will pop up). It is a free subscription for you to use, containing useful resources that can help anyone looking to learn more about our faith. We've also included some additional information about this Sacrament in this Confirmation package.

In the choice of a sponsor, please ensure they are at least 16 years old, baptized, and have received the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Confirmation in the Catholic Church. A sponsor must be a practicing Catholic, as they are intended to be lifelong faith mentors and guides to those being Confirmed.

We ask you to please register your child and provide a copy of their baptismal certificate (unless they were baptized here at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church). This year, registration is offered online for your convenience on our website and is available by this link: [Confirmation Registration](#). **You are kindly requested to register and submit a baptismal certificate (as needed) to your child's teacher by November 7th, 2025.**

Our parish's Confirmations will take place this year on the following dates:

Immaculate Heart of Mary School: *Wednesday, November 26th at 7 PM*

St. Gabriel's School: *Thursday, November 27th at 7 PM*

Our parish team is here to assist you with any questions you may have. Please feel welcome to reach out to us at our parish office any time!

Fr. Greg Merkley and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Team



The Great Gift of the Sacrament of Confirmation

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 2:4). In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit, who is the third Person of the [Holy Trinity](#) – Almighty God – comes down and fills us with His gifts – especially what we call the 7 gifts and 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is because He loves us. Jesus promises, *"the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you"* (John 14:26). What else did Jesus say?

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:9-11)

God, who is Love (1 John 4:8), made us in the image and likeness of Himself. That means we're made to love and be loved by others. God loves us so much that He instituted the [Church](#) (Matthew 16:18) and the 7 Sacraments. One of these [7 Sacraments](#) is [Confirmation](#). It is the last of the 3 [Sacraments of Initiation](#), coming after Baptism and the Most Holy Eucharist. In Baptism, we received the Holy Spirit, but at [Confirmation](#), the Holy Spirit's presence becomes much stronger. Let's learn more about this great Sacrament!

What is Confirmation?

The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) (a book summarizing our faith) explains that 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 1285](#)). At our Confirmation, we are taking part in our own personal [Pentecost](#). Just like after the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at *Pentecost* and made them *strong* and *bold*, so Confirmation does this for us. The Holy Spirit then guides us throughout our lives towards God's good plans for us as long as we let Him.

What happens when you get "Confirmed"?

When we receive this Sacrament, the bishop or [priest](#) will lay his hands on the Confirmandi (those to be confirmed) one at a time and say, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." This "sealing" is a branding on our soul that indicates we belong to God in a new way (Eph 1:13-14). We are anointed with the same sacred Chrism used at our baptism, symbolizing the renewal of our baptismal promises. Our initiation has now come to an end and the graces given to us at Baptism are growing as we take on the responsibilities of our faith. [Confirmation](#) is sometimes referred to as the Sacrament of evangelization and martyrdom (martyr means *witness*) because in this Sacrament we become soldiers in Christ's heavenly army, promising to live and witness to our faith. The world today can certainly use many more strong, brave, faithful young people spreading Christ's love and the message of the Gospel.



The Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit



There are 12 fruits and 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive when we are Confirmed. These are the tools God gives us so we can live out the dreams God has for us, including to become [saints](#). A saint is simply someone who follows God's plan for their lives heroically, doing everything they can to be faithful to God.



How can I prepare for this great Sacrament?

There are so many things we should be doing to prepare our hearts and souls to receive the graces of this Sacrament. We should begin communicating with God in prayer every day, creating a habitual prayer routine and building on our relationship with God. Talk to God from your heart in your own words. Ask God especially for a sincere desire that He pours out His graces, blessings, and especially the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit upon you. It may also help to reflect on the Bible, especially the Gospels and New Testament, every day. Additionally, in order to prepare our souls to be marked and sealed by God by the Holy Spirit, we should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as frequently as needed, usually at least once before being Confirmed. This way we will be more open to receive God's graces and blessings, especially when we receive Confirmation. We should also attend the [Holy Sacrifice of the Mass](#) as often as we can. Each of these things will help to deepen our faith, which will result in us receiving more graces, and will also help us to grow in the virtues. [Virtues](#) are good habits, especially with how we relate with God and those around us. Virtues help us strive to be people of love and compassion, following Jesus' teachings, and being of service to others.

In addition, we often have to choose a [Confirmation name](#), sometimes the name of a patron saint that means something special to us, and a sponsor.

What is a Sponsor?

A sponsor is someone that you trust who will hold you accountable to the promises you are making in this Sacrament, as well who you think will be "a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this Sacrament." In other words, [the Church says](#) your sponsor must be: (a) chosen by the confirmand (the one to be confirmed) and suitable for the role, intending to fulfil it, (b) 16 years of age or older, (c) a practicing Catholic, having already been Confirmed and received first Holy Communion, (d) neither your father nor mother.

What other resources are there to learn more?

- [The Hamilton Diocese's Resources for Preparing for Confirmation](#)
- [The Catechism of the Catholic Church – The Church's Teaching About Confirmation](#)
- [Catholic Link - Ways to Prepare for Confirmation](#)
- [Busted Halo - An Excellent Short Video Summarizing Confirmation](#)
- [Beginning Catholic - A Detailed Explanation of the Sacrament of Confirmation](#)
- [Decision Point – A Program for Confirmation Preparation](#)

Confirmation Information

Information about the Sacrament of Confirmation

General information: The Bishop has arranged that these celebrations take place in a *liturgy*, which is not a Mass. This has the positive side of spotlighting the Sacrament of Confirmation that much more.

Biblical Background: Confirmation finds its roots in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and disciples on Pentecost. This empowering of the Holy Spirit strengthened them to boldly proclaim the Gospel. (Acts 2:1-4)

Meaningful Symbols in the Liturgy:

Renewal of Baptismal Promises: Just as in Baptism, the candidates and the entire congregation renew their baptismal promises, professing their faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Extending/Laying on of Hands: This ancient gesture signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and invokes the Holy Spirit's gifts upon the person being confirmed.

Anointing with Chrism: The anointing with sacred chrism by the bishop or priest signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them and imprints an indelible mark – a sacred seal – on the soul of the recipient, making them a fully initiated member of the Church.

Effects of the Sacrament:

Fullness of the Holy Spirit: Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism by sealing the recipient with the Holy Spirit, strengthening them to live out their faith courageously.

Deepening of Baptismal Grace: Through Confirmation, candidates are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action.

Becoming Soldiers for Christ: In the early Church, Confirmation was associated with becoming a soldier for Christ, being strengthened, willing to stand firm in the face of challenges and adversities.

Bond with the Church: Confirmation deepens the recipient's bond with the Church, enabling them to more actively participate in the Church's mission of spreading the Gospel.

Special Graces: The Sacrament of Confirmation bestows upon the recipient special graces to live as faithful disciples of Christ and witnesses to the Gospel.

Practical points about the Liturgy of Confirmation

Entrance: When the liturgy begins, Confirmandi will be seated, with your sponsor next to them. Confirmandi, their sponsor, and their family and friends will be seated beforehand in the pews, making things easier for everyone.

Liturgy of the Word: As often happens at liturgies, we will have a first reading, a psalm, a second reading, and a Gospel. The readings will be from: Isaiah 61, Psalm 23, Acts 2, and John 14.

The candidates will be presented to celebrant. After that, a homily will take place. During the homily, the presider will speak with those present about the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Renewal of Baptismal promises: The presider will invite the Confirmandi (those being confirmed) to renew their baptismal promises, by responding “I do” to series of questions. These “I do”s should be spoken out loud and from the heart.

Laying on of Hands: The presider will then extend his hands over the candidates and pray, asking the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

Anointing with Chrism: The presider will come down below to the center aisle, and each Confirmandi (with their sponsor behind them, placing their right hand on the right shoulder of the Confirmandi), will be Confirmed. When the Confirmandi comes to be confirmed, the following dialogue takes place:

Confirmandi: “Father my name is _____ ” (*Confirmation name*)

Presider: “(Confirmation name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (*Confirmandi are anointed with Chrism*)

Confirmandi: “Amen.”

Presider: “Peace be with you.”

Confirmandi: “And with your Spirit.”

The universal prayer (also called petitions or prayers of the faithful): Those assigned will read the petitions. The presider will open and close them as usual.

The Lord’s prayer: All then pray the Our Father together.

Closing remarks: Some closing remarks will be offered, and instructions about photos will be given.

Concluding blessing: The presider will give a blessing to all present, before the procession of liturgical ministers out.

***After the celebration, photos may be taken.
All are asked to be mindful that they are in a sacred space and house of prayer.***

The Confirmandi and their sponsors are kindly requested to arrive at least 30 minutes before the liturgy begins. All attendees are invited to please wear clothing that is appropriate for a special occasion in the Church, which is a sacred space. Please avoid clothing that clings too tightly, is revealing, or low-cut. Shoulders should be covered. “Expensive or elaborate clothing is neither necessary nor desirable” for those being Confirmed (Hamilton Diocese’s guidelines on Confirmation for Confirmandi). Confirmandi will be wearing special red gowns that will be rented for the occasion. More information will be forthcoming. All attending this sacred occasion are kindly asked to please dress appropriately.