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# 2023 - 2024 HOLY CROSS CONFIRMATION PACKET

## Prayer to the Holy Spirit

*Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.*

*Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
And you shall renew the face of the earth.*

*Let us pray:  
O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,  
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,  
grant that by the same Holy Spirit  
we may be truly wise  
and ever enjoy his consolations.*

*Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

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A digital or handwritten copy of the letter is due no later than April 5.

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# YOUTH RETREAT



## Timeline

- Meet at church for dinner at **5:00pm on Friday, Oct. 6**
- Carpool to St. Therese's Camp in Wasilla.
- Return to church by **10:45am on Sunday, Oct. 8**
- Commissioning at **Sunday 11:00am Mass**

## Retreat Contents at a Glance

- Who is God? Is there somebody out there?
- Growing relationships with Jesus
- Prayer Services, Reconciliation Service, Social

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Drivers (adults with insurance; no teen drivers. There are ~13 students; if each car holds 5 people, I need 5 drivers).
- Overnight Chaperones (2 men, 2 women).
- Small Group Facilitators and/or Leaders (you will NOT be in the same small group as your teen).
- Setup / Cleanup / Meal Team works behind-the-scenes.

## Packing List

- We are only gone for 2 days; travel like a carry-on flight.
- Sleeping bag, pillow, towel, toiletries
- Warm clothes, tennis or hiking shoes, flashlight
- Water bottle, snack to share with 10+ friends (boys bring a salty snack, girls bring a sweet snack)
- There isn't any designated "homework time" this retreat.
- NO PHONES, games, laptops, or other electronics. Battery alarm clock and analog watch ("not-smart watch") are ok. Entertainment tech will be confiscated.
- Jerica's emergency number: (907) 306-9363.
- Camp number: (907) 232-2066.

# RETREAT FAQ'S



## "Listen with the ear of your heart"

This quote from St. Benedict invites us to listen with love, instead of listening to plan your response or argument. By listening attentively to the other, we show them Christ's presence and compassion.

## Why no Tech?

While it's certainly true that we can pray and evangelize through digital media, technology is often used as a distraction. Sometimes we use it to avoid interacting with others, or to hide from our own feelings and thoughts. This weekend, we will practice being present.

## Disagreement vs. Condemnation

It's an important and difficult skill to learn: how to hold a conversation with someone who has a different opinion.

It's important that you share your thoughts, because each person has a unique and valuable opinion. We welcome questions and disagreement, especially about difficult topics. You have much to teach us, and we have much to share with you. Let's learn from one another.

## Safety First: a few reminders

Always practice bear and moose safety. Do not bring firearms, alcohol, or drugs of any kind (including e-cigarettes, tobacco, marijuana, etc). Please stay within the camp property, and be mindful of time if you choose to take a walk with friends during a break. Spend free time outside or in the main lodge, not in the sleeping cabins; no entering cabins of the opposite sex under any circumstances. Thank you!

# SERVICE PROJECT

## When is this due?

- You may begin your project as early as you like. Please allow planning and promotion time (see Part 3 in the following pages).
- All proposals, regardless of launch date, must be submitted by the Sunday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 19) at [holycrossalaska.net/confirmation](http://holycrossalaska.net/confirmation).
- All projects must be completed by May 1.

## A project isn't...

- Manual labor only (though manual labor may be included)
- A fundraiser with the sole intention of raising money
- For a for-profit business (you can support a nonprofit, but need to show how YOU are leading the project, and not merely attending a nonprofit's event/project)

## Things to consider...

- You may lead the project on your own, or co-lead with up to 2 classmates (group of 3 max).
- **Is your project related to a holiday or special event?** Avoid starting or ending on Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday/Easter weekends... but Advent, Lent, after-Easter, and Ordinary Time are all acceptable seasons.
- **What time of year works better for you?** YOU are the one leading this project, and it has to work with your academic / athletic schedule and your family's schedule.
- **Have a scheduling "Plan B."** We try very hard to have only one person per weekend doing announcements, and if there's something already on the calendar, you might have to adjust forward or backward a week.
- **Project deadlines.** You can submit your proposal early, but no later than the Sunday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 19). The project must be completed by May 1.

# PROJECT PROPOSAL

## Steps

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**Brainstorming phase.** Bring your ideas to the Confirmation Retreat. We will have a session on service projects. Ask your friends, parents, and sponsor for ideas and feedback.

- **Part 1.** Name your "Why."
- **Part 2.** Establish sample details.
- **Part 3:** Establish a sample timeline.

Submit parts 1-3 online at [holycrossalaska.net/confirmation](http://holycrossalaska.net/confirmation). Meet with Jerica to discuss project details.

After approval:

- **Part 4:** Create content (people can't get involved unless they know about it!)
- **Part 5:** Launch weekend and beyond.

## Part 1: Name your "Why."

- Tell the story: I/we chose this project because...
  - What issue/problem are you addressing?
  - Who benefits from this project? If you partner with a non-profit, which one?
  - How does this relate to faith and our mission to be Christ's presence in the world?
- 6 ■ How can members of the community get involved?

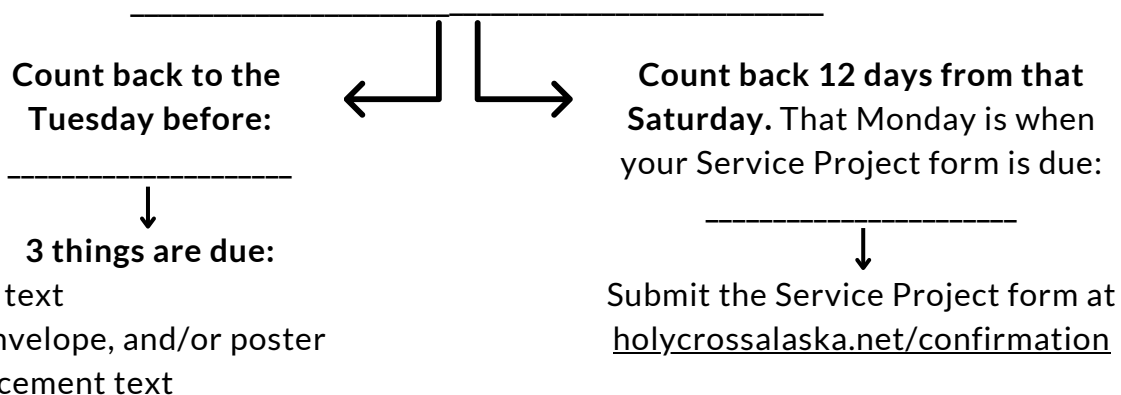
# HOW TO SET A TIMELINE

## Part 2: Establish Details

- Title:
- Start/End Date(s):
- Time(s):
- Location:
- Donations / Things to Bring:
- Sponsored By (you and nonprofit):
- Questions? Contact: (you or Jerica)
  - Phone:
  - Email:
- RSVP Required?  Yes, by: \_\_\_\_\_  No
- How to RSVP  Paper Form (create this)  Online Form (create this)

## Part 3: Timeline Worksheet

My preferred weekend date (Saturday/Sunday):



Email content to [formation@holycrossalaska.net](mailto:formation@holycrossalaska.net)

If you are reading your own announcement, talk with your family to decide which Mass(es) you can attend:  
Sat 5pm    Sun 8am    Sun 11am

Any handmade posters or donation boxes must be dropped off at the parish before Saturday night Mass!  
Contact Jerica if you need to drop off supplies early or late.

# HOW TO PUBLICIZE AN EVENT

## Part 4: Create Content (AFTER APPROVAL!!)

**DO NOT USE RANDOM INTERNET PHOTOS** unless they are explicitly in public domain or are from a commercial-free website. Copyright can be an issue if we put it in the bulletin, because the bulletin is posted online. Use a free-photo site such as Canva, Pixabay, or Unsplash if you need stock photos).

**We do all the printing;** send files as .pdf, .jpg, or Word/Google doc.

**Homemade posters and donation boxes** are also welcome and should be dropped off before Saturday Mass. If you'd like to do something different or special, just ask!

**These 3 things are due Tuesday before your "launch weekend:"**

- **Bulletin Blurb:** use information from Parts 1-2. Word count should be <250 words.
- **Flyer:** recycle the text from your bulletin blurb. Provide extra details and images as necessary. An 8.5x11" size can be placed in foyer or bulletin. Or, an 8x8" size can be posted on bulletin board wall calendar.
- **Announcements:**
  - If you're reading your announcement aloud, please let Jerica know which Masses you will be attending. (If you're not doing all 3, see also below). It should be under 3 minutes long.
  - If you're not reading your announcement, write a draft for Father to read out loud (you should practice reading it out loud at home, so it makes sense and sounds good). It should be under 3 minutes long.

## Part 5: Launch Weekend and Beyond

- **Stick around for a few minutes after Mass** in the Fellowship Hall and greet people. Answer any questions they have.
- **If you're doing multiple weekends,** make sure to check on your display/box each weekend. Keep it tidy, and if your donation bin overflows, store the goods at home until the end.
- **Write a little thank-you** for the bulletin afterwards. "Thank you for supporting X. We raised/served X amount of things/people."



# LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

All Confirmation students are trained in a liturgical ministry and participate within the regular weekend schedule.

## **Which Mass do you attend?**

When you choose a ministry, it is helpful to let the coordinator know which Mass your family usually attends. This makes it easier to add you to the schedule.

## **When is this due?**

Liturgical Ministry preferences are due by Nov. 19 so Confirmandi can participate in liturgical ministries throughout the year, before Confirmation.

## **Who do I contact?**

To learn more about each ministry, contact the ministry coordinator, listed on the back page of the parish bulletin.

## **Altar Servers**

- Assist at the altar during worship.

## **Choir/Musician**

- Make a joyful noise. Those who sing pray twice!

## **Hospitality**

- Welcome all parishioners and visitors. Assist with seating and communion flow.

## **Lectors**

- Proclaim the Word of God during the first and/or second readings.

## **Art & Environment**

- Create a welcoming and sacred space of worship.

## **Sacristans**

- Prepare the altar and altar vessels; assist other ministries (approval only).

# CHOOSING A SPONSOR

A Confirmation sponsor is a role model Catholic in your life who accompanies you on your journey of faith. Sponsors cannot be your parents, but they may be one of the Baptismal godparents or another Catholic role model in your life.

Sponsors must be practicing members of the Catholic Church (you can read more about the precepts of the Church in the Catechism, paragraphs 2041-2043).

- Attends Mass on Sundays/ holy days
- Goes to confession at least yearly
- Practices fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday & Good Friday
- Helps provide for the needs of the Church (service/support)
- Sponsors must have received the sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist.
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years old.

TALK TO YOUR SPONSOR at least once before submitting your form. Please choose your sponsor by the week before Thanksgiving and complete the form online.

## Sponsor Chat Overview

- Meet with your sponsor 1:1 at least 3 times before you are Confirmed. This can be via phone, over lunch or coffee, or before/after Mass, a service project, or Family Session.
- Pray together each time (one does opening prayer and the other does closing prayer).
- Spend at least 30 minutes each time in conversation about faith-related topics.
- You don't have to answer every single question provided, but they are good starting points.
- BOTH the Sponsor AND the Confirmandi should ask and answer questions.

## After 3 Chats:

Submit (typed or written) a note that includes:

- The dates you met with your sponsor
- Something new you learned about your sponsor
- Something new you learned about yourself
- Something new you learned about God or your faith

# SPONSOR CHATS

## Sample Questions #1: Knowing God

- 1.) ***How did you become Catholic?*** Were you baptized when you were a baby or did you become Catholic when you were older? Why did you choose to stay Catholic?
- 2.) ***As a Catholic, what makes you different*** from other Christians? Give a few examples. What is your favorite Scripture passage, verse or story? Tell me why.
- 3.) ***What is your favorite Bible verse or story?*** Tell me why.
- 4.) ***Tell me about a time in your life when it was difficult to be Catholic*** (perhaps a time when you were ridiculed because of your faith, or a time when you struggled to believe in the teachings of your Catholic faith). What did you do to “keep your faith” or find answers to your questions during these times? If you are currently in one of those moments, what help do you need and where are you looking for it?
- 5.) ***Who do you turn to, or what resources do you use*** when you find that you do not know an answer to a question about your faith? How can you tell whether you have found a “good Catholic resource” on the internet?
- 6.) ***What is the difference between*** knowing a lot of facts about a person and actually “knowing” a person? What is the difference between “knowing God” and “knowing about God?” Who is Jesus to you?
- 7.) ***What teaching of the Church do most people misunderstand?*** OR, what misconceptions have you heard when talking to non-Catholic friends? (i.e., someone thinks Catholics believe X but the Church actually teaches Y). How do you react or respond when topics like this come up?
- 8.) ***What does the Church teach about...*** (insert difficult hot-button topic here)?
- 9.) ***Ask your own question:***

# SPONSOR CHATS

## Sample Questions #2: Loving God

- 1.) **When was the first time** you experienced God's presence in a meaningful way? Tell the story.
- 2.) **What does it look like to "love God"** in today's day and age?
- 3.) **How do you pray?** Do you have a favorite place to pray or a favorite time to pray? Do you ever find it difficult to pray? Who or what do you usually pray for?
- 4.) **How do you picture the Holy Spirit?** What images come to mind? When or how have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- 5.) **In what ways do you feel that celebrating the Eucharist** (the Mass) strengthens and nourishes you to live as a Catholic? Did you ever have a time when you did not like going to Mass? What do you do to be more present or pay better attention?
- 6.) **One very special aspect of our Catholic faith** is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell me about your own feelings and thoughts about and experiences with this Sacrament. Is it difficult for you to celebrate this Sacrament or was there a time when it was? What kind of preparations do you find helpful before you celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- 7.) **What does "forgiveness" mean to you?** What do you do when you find it very difficult to forgive someone who has hurt you? What do you do when you need to ask forgiveness from someone you have hurt?
- 8.) **Which sacraments have you received so far?** Which ones do you anticipate receiving in the future? Which one is your favorite, or has been most impactful on you, and why?
- 9.) **Ask your own question:**

# SPONSOR CHATS

## Sample Questions #3: Serving God

- 1.) **Who is someone you know** who really tries to live a Catholic Christian lifestyle? What makes him/her different from others?
- 2.) **Do you regularly participate in service projects** or volunteer opportunities at your parish, work, or in your neighborhood? Describe what you do and how it impacts your life.
- 3.) **Have you ever felt particularly close to God?** Tell me about it. Do you think feelings are necessary for faith? Why or why not?
- 4.) **How do you give back to your church?** What ministries are you / have you been involved in? Which one was your favorite, and why?
- 5.) **How does your faith affect your life** outside of Sunday morning—
  - How you interact with people at work?
  - How you spend your money?
  - How you spend your time?
- 6.) **Which corporal work of mercy** do you perform most often? Which is most difficult?
  - Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Shelter the homeless, Care for the sick, Visit the imprisoned, & Bury the dead
- 7.) **What do you think God is calling you to do with your life?** Which life vocation do you think he has planned for your life (single, married, priest, religious) and your career (job/work)?
- 8.) **If you had a million dollars** and you had to spend it all on people in need, who would you help, and how? What can you do with just \$10 to help these same people? What can you do for free?
- 9.) **Ask your own question:**

# SPONSOR CHATS

## Sample Questions #4: Confirmation-Specific

- 1.) ***Do you / did you want to be Confirmed?*** Do you want to be Catholic for the rest of your life? Why or why not?
  - 2.) ***What does it mean to be Confirmed?*** Why is this important, or different from any of the other sacraments?
  - 3.) ***Why did you choose your Sponsor?*** Give an example of how he/she is an excellent Catholic role model.
  - 4.) ***What name did you choose for your Confirmation*** name and why? Why is he/she one of your favorite saints? What is there about his/her life that has helped you on your faith journey?
  - 5.) ***At the Sacrament of Confirmation***, the gifts we first received at our Baptism are strengthened and increased. Which gift do you need most in your life right now? Or, which gift do you need to use more? Sponsors, reflecting back on your life experiences and decisions, which gifts have you used most?
- PS: The Gifts of the Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel (Right Judgment), Fortitude (Courage), Knowledge, Piety (Reverence), & Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)
- 6.) ***What is one of the greatest challenges to being Catholic?*** What is the best thing about being Catholic?
  - 7.) ***In what ways do you still need to grow*** in your Catholic faith?
  - 8.) ***Did anything in your life change*** after you were Confirmed? Or, do you expect anything in your life to change after you are Confirmed?
  - 9.) ***Ask your own question:***

# CHOOSING A SAINT

Confirmation candidates must select a Confirmation name of a saint. Through Confirmation, when they are called to become a new creation in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the name represents that their Baptism is complete. In the Bible and the Early Church, a new name signifies a new stage in one's life marked by a strong commitment to God.

Abram became Abraham (Genesis 17:5)

Jacob became Israel (Genesis 35:10)

Simon became Peter (Matthew 16:17-18)

Saul became Paul (Acts 13:9)

Candidates select the name of the saint they want to follow as their patron. Many times, the candidate chooses a saint they respect or are devoted to.

## **What is a Patron Saint?**

A Patron Saint is chosen to protect or guard over areas of life. They were quite open to receiving God's immense love. They helped the world align more closely with Christ and the Gospel through the cooperation of God's grace. We are urged to act in a similar manner in Confirmation. Our mission is to serve as soldiers for Christ. Actually, in an older version of the ceremony, the bishop would give the newly confirmed person a gentle slap on the face while declaring, "You are a soldier of Christ."

We are reminded of our own call to holiness by these chosen Patron Saints. However, as Catholics, we are aware of the truth that the saints are still very much with God in Heaven. Thus, they are not only spectators or role models; they have the potential to be our real intercessors. They support us in prayer, encourage us, protect us, lead us, and assist us.

# How to Choose A Patron Saint



## 4 Popular Ways

- 1 Your Vocation or Station in Life
- 2 Your Occupation or Field of Study
- 3 Your Hobbies or Special Interests
- 4 Your Current Life Circumstances

facebook.com/CatholicCompany | CatholicCompany.com

Your Name:

Your Saint's Name:

Why did you pick this saint?

5 things everyone should know about this saint and his/her story (use full sentences!)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Please submit this form at [holycrossalaska.net/confirmation](http://holycrossalaska.net/confirmation).

Still can't decide? Let Jerica know.

**Saint names are due November 19.**



# LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP

## About this letter:

- Final versions of the letters should be hand-delivered or emailed to Jerica NO LATER THAN April 5.
- A paragraph is at least 3 sentences!!
- This is YOUR letter- it should be honest and unique to your faith and experiences.
- Yes, he actually reads these - he might even ask about or talk about them during the Confirmation Mass.

## Sample Template

[TODAY'S DATE]

Dear Archbishop Bellisario,

[Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself: name, school, extracurriculars, hobbies, background, etc.]  
This year, I have prepared for Confirmation by... [PART 1: mention a few specific details from your preparation process, such as your service project, retreat experience, saint's name and why you chose him/her, favorite classes, choosing/meeting with your sponsor, ministry apprenticeship, etc. PART 2: how did these things help you grow in faith, change your perspective, or experience Jesus in a new way?]

I want to be confirmed because... [Give several reasons. What does the sacrament mean to you? (not graduation, but fulfilling baptism and being sent out) How does your faith make you a better person? Or, which gift of the Holy Spirit would be particularly helpful in your life?]

[What's your plan going forward? Write how (SPECIFICALLY) you hope to live your faith (more than attending Mass on Sunday). What challenges are you facing, and how does your faith help? Or, what challenges do your friends/peers face, and how does your faith help you help them?]

[End with gratitude: 1-2 sentences.]

Sincerely,

Name