

MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

At what age can teens receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Archdiocese of Seattle? Archbishop J. Peter Sartain has asked that beginning fall 2019, teens should be in seventh grade to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. At MQP, teens are Confirmed in late January, or early February.

Can a teen be confirmed after the seventh grade?

Yes! The Sacrament of Confirmation is about readiness. Confirmation is now being offered to youth in the seventh grade, but we will continue to have programs for 8-12th grade youth as well as offerings for young adults and adults. The hope is that each person can decide for themselves when they feel ready to receive this Sacrament.

Why does the Archdiocese require a two year program?

The hope with our two year program is not to put limitations on teens receiving the Sacrament, but really to help the teen be fully formed in their faith before receiving the Sacrament. Through a **“proximate” year of formation** with the teen going to Mass every Sunday, and either attending our high school youth ministry program weekly, or, attending a Catholic high school, and then the following year **being one of “immediate” formation with the continuation of youth ministry** and/or Catholic education, continued participation in Mass and twice monthly Confirmation classes, the hope is that teen will have a good, solid foundation in their faith that is accompanied by the foundation they have been receiving at home by their primary catechists: their parents. **The other advantage of teens doing a “proximate” year is** that the Confirmation Director is able to begin to get to know the teen, and the teen begins to form a community with the other students their own age to be able to feel as though they are welcome and belong to their parish community as they go through the steps towards confirmation.

Does the year of “proximate” formation have to have occurred the year directly prior to the “immediate” year, or can they have gone to a Catholic school in Elementary or Middle school, or been involved in middle school ministry and have that qualify for their “proximate” formation?

Any sort of prior formation is a wonderful thing, as we are called to always be helping our young people be formed in the faith, and parents especially as they are the primary catechists for their children. **However, the “proximate” year should be done the year directly prior to the “immediate” year to ensure that the teen hasn’t had a gap in their formation, but instead that they have a solid foundation that has been building upon itself to get to a point where they own their faith and are they themselves desiring to be a fully initiated member of the Body of Christ. If the teen missed the proximate year and it’s their senior year of high school, please talk to Chelsea about alternate options.**

What **if my teen doesn’t want to be confirmed when they begin in September, or even a week prior to Confirmation in January?**

Our God gave us the gift of free will for this very reason—to be able to choose him or to be able to form our own path. If your teen decides at some point in the process that they do not wish to be confirmed, that is okay. It is better to let them decide this than to push them to be confirmed when they themselves



do not fully desire it. God knows our hearts; God knows when someone is not ready to receive a Sacrament and He will not push His Spirit upon that person. It is better to let that teen step back now, than to be forced into it, because this may lead them to ultimately turning away from the Church anyway. If your teen decides not to be confirmed, we would recommend you let them make this decision for themselves, but keep praying for them, teaching them in the faith and encouraging them that that door is always open. If not in high school, MQP has a summer young adult confirmation program, and many colleges also have nearby churches or campus ministry programs with confirmation classes for young adults as well. Letting them discover and choose their faith for themselves as they are ready instead of forcing it upon them may just be the ticket to them coming back to the Church later and maintaining their faith for the long-hall. Keep encouraging, praying and inviting—God will do the rest ☺

Can a parent be a Confirmation sponsor? Should the sponsor be someone close by or can it be a relative out of state or even out of the country?

Parents cannot be confirmation sponsors for the sole purpose of the teen being able to find another adult to support them in their faith life and to connect with. Sponsors can be siblings or another teen who has already been confirmed and is sixteen or older, cousins, aunts, uncles, family friends, godparents, and so on. It is best if the sponsor is close by to help the two have that close-knit relationship as they grow in faith together and also so the sponsor can attend the sponsor events, but it is okay if the sponsor does not live nearby. In cases where the sponsor does not live **close by, a “proxy” sponsor may come to the sponsor class, and can even step-in on the day of Confirmation, in place of the actual sponsor.**

I see there is a retreat/service requirement that is in addition to the required September and November retreat. Does this have to be one of the options listed on the calendar?

Good question! No—if the teen has been on a Catholic retreat or a day-long Church service day outside of these listed, they can talk to Chelsea about points to a lot and record on the **“Retreat/Service Requirement” form**. Please just be sure it is one that has been done **during the teen’s immediate year of formation** (the school year in which the teen is getting confirmed), AND was done in a Catholic setting. Examples include: service projects or retreats done with another parish, or at a Catholic school (such as the Destiny retreat), service projects or retreats done through MQP such as the EXCEL or Food Fast retreat, the ONE Week Mission Trip, Agape, YMP, the Christmas Service Project, etc.

I noticed that teens are expected to go to Mass every Sunday—what if my teen goes to Mass at their Catholic high school during the week? Does this count?

Going to Mass any time is ALWAYS wonderful—but as the third commandment states, we need to keep Holy the Sabbath day and attend Mass every Sunday. This is not because God needs us to go to Mass, but because we need Mass to grow closer to Him, to be filled up for the week ahead, to grow in our faith and to be a part of the Body of Christ; His Church. Teens need to be going to Mass EVERY Sunday in preparation for the Sacrament. Missing Mass on Sundays is a mortal sin and should be avoided unless absolutely unavoidable due to sickness, or other circumstances. Mass should be a priority as you make faith a priority in your life.

Do teens still need to go to Youth Ministry while they are going to Confirmation classes?

Yes. Youth Ministry supplements the Sun. and Tues. Confirmation classes, and also helps teens to grow in community with other teens and experience their faith in other ways outside of the formal confirmation classes. Teens attending a Catholic school are also greatly encouraged to attend youth **ministry as well. This is also one of the options to gain points for the “Additional Faith Event Requirement.”**