Confirmation Overview & Upcoming Changes
St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Student Center Parish

Start here →This article from America Media (a Jesuit publication) explains some of the theology in an easy-to-understand-way. It's worth a read!

What **IS** Confirmation?

- Confirmation = strengthening of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation, along with Baptism and Eucharist. The Church views these three Sacraments as one unified process, although separated over time.
    - Baptism begins the journey of our faith life.
    - Eucharist nourishes our faith life with God every time we receive it.
    - Confirmation strengthens that faith life by receiving the Holy Spirit in a deeper way to live and share our faith.

What is Confirmation **NOT**? (despite perhaps some of us being taught otherwise in good faith)

- Confirmation is not a graduation, a coming-of-age milestone, nor the end of religious education/formation. In fact, it's more like a starting point for deeper growth. Moving to a younger grade will help engage our kids (and parents) especially during the middle school and teen years when faith is often tested and formed.
    - Confirmation is a gift to us from God. The sacrament itself is *God acting firs*t, not a reward or a milestone for us to complete.
- It is not about "becoming an adult in the Church" nor beginning the next stage of life in the Church. Our faith journey didn't start at Confirmation; it started at Baptism. In Confirmation, the Church believes God strengthens the grace already given, especially through the Holy Spirit, so we can live our faith more fully.
- It's not about reaching a certain age and "choosing" to continue being Catholic. In fact, the Church does not teach that Confirmation depends on a specific age or level of maturity or reason. In fact, in many parts of the Church worldwide currently (and historically), Confirmation is given much earlier, sometimes even in infancy or when a child receives First Communion.
    - For example, when Fr. Opondo celebrated First Communion with youth members of the African Community at St. Cate's, they would receive Confirmation at the same time, which is more customary in some of the African countries from which those members came.
- *A helpful way to think of it: Confirmation is not a finish line; it is fuel for the faith journey ahead.*

What will this look like in our Diocese and St. Catherine's?

- Same curriculum used for every parish preparing students
- Will involve the student **and** their parent(s)
- 11 monthly sessions (90 minutes) with family take-home activities

    - Each month's session includes a variety of immersive prayer opportunities and developmental age activities, youth formation, parent formation, family engagement, and sponsor conversations.
- The following is from the initial information I received from the Diocese:
    - The 11-month Confirmation process forms **youth and parents together** through three movements:
        - **Belonging**: discovering that we are known, loved, and part of God's family and **Identity**: understanding who we are, and whose we are, in Christ
        - **Encounter**: meeting Jesus and the Holy Spirit personally in Scripture, Sacrament, and prayer
        - **Mission**: living as disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit.

For students who are already past 6th grade/will be past 6th grade by the time this transition takes place, we will have more details upcoming about how your student will be included in this process.

Ultimately, once the switch has been completely made, going forward this process will begin in the fall of one's 5th-grade year and will culminate in Confirmation in the fall of 6th grade.