

Costs.

All our catechists are volunteers and give of themselves willingly and freely. Some of them have been involved over many years helping and preparing many groups of young people for confirmation. We thank them for their dedication and fidelity.

All parish programmes have built in costs, books, equipment etc. and the bulk of these costs are carried by the parish as a whole.

For this confirmation programme the costs are considerable. **The parish will carry most of the costs but ask you to contribute towards the cost of buying and using DVD's, books etc.** This will be thirty (£30) pounds per candidate. We think this is a reasonable and fair amount. However we do realize this may be difficult for a few especially if you have two young people on the programme. If you have any difficulties with this do talk to Bridget or one of the other catechists or Fr. Patrick.

Thank you for reading through this leaflet and for coming to this meeting. **Do keep all our young people in your prayers**, as we will do, asking that the Holy Spirit will strengthen them in Faith, in Love, in Life.

Your Catechists.

Your Parish Team



Programme

St Patrick's Parish

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Confirmation Programme. 2022.

Thank you for coming to this meeting. It's good to see you all here and to know that ***your presence speaks of your commitment*** to enabling all our young people who have asked to be confirmed next year. ***Your presence*** here and how you support and encourage your teenager throughout the next months is a ***vital part of the confirmation programme.***

We, in the parish, and especially our Confirmation Catechists Fr. Patrick and Bridget will give of our time and skills throughout the programme using various methods; Media/DVD presentations, discussion sessions, workshops, team building, experiential learning, etc. to help your young person explore what it means to have a relationship with Christ; to be a person of faith in today's multi-culture, multi-media, fast moving complex world.

Any ***programme*** for youth, whether confirmation or not, ***needs to start at where our young people are coming from;*** we have to be aware of their culture and language.

What are their hopes?

What and where are their struggles?

How can we help them?

What practicalities need to be in place so that they can relax, be themselves and have fun while learning within a faith environment?

Four Observations (among many) about our youth.

Interactive.

More, much more than any other generation our youth are highly interactive. Mobile phones, E-mails, texts, computer blobs, Instagram, etc. are the natural means for our youth to communicate. This ultra fast and often furious way of communicating is with us to stay and new technologies in these fields will continue to evolve and grow. Gone are the days of sitting down and writing a letter as a primary means of communicating. And who would have thought, ten years ago, that we could access any information, anywhere in the world, in any language, through the World Wide Web?

and 'Sufra' (the word is from the Arabic and means 'come to the table') our local Food band, www.sufra.org.uk may be considered. Whatever our candidates opt for, the purpose will be to enable them to have an experience of faith in action and a better understanding of the social call of the Gospel. Love of God and Love of Neighbour.

All of the above topics are the elements that make up the whole Confirmation Programme and it is ***important that all are attended.*** Nothing is optional. Like a jigsaw puzzle all the bits are needed to get the full picture and we are about enabling your young person to get and appreciate the full picture! ***However we are realistic and know that genuine difficulties and problems can arise.*** So if you are having any of these we are here to listen and help. Do feel free to talk with one of the catechists first or with Fr. Patrick who is the overall leader and responsible for the smooth running of the programme.

Confirmation Mass

This year Confirmation will take place at **The Five Precious Wounds church Stonebridge on Friday 27th May at 7pm** rather than in our parish. There are a number of reasons for this. Last year our Bishops attended 160 confirmation groups to administer the sacrament between Easter and Ascension Day. They have asked parishes to come together if at all possible, and join in with other parishes in the celebration of the sacrament. This will lessen the burden for them during the 'confirmation season'. Like other years ***we have decided to participate this year*** to see what benefits it may have for our young people and also for us catechists and for you, parents and family. One thing it will do is ***give our candidates a sense of the wider family of the church in the diocese and see and meet many other young people who will be confirmed on that day.***

Details of the actual celebration will be given by the parish nearer the time. Once we have these we will call a meeting of all the parents to discuss the arrangements we will need to put in place. (Seating arrangements, readers, servers etc. All of this will depend on where we are at with Cov 19. Please God by them all with be well.

THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME

The sessions

These will take place in St Patrick's Parish Hall on the dates, days and times set out in the programme schedule leaflet. **(Monday: starting at 6.30pm)**

These sessions will be made up of *experiential learning, reflection and sharing with input from 'Getting Confirmed' booklet which each candidate will have.*

All candidates are expected to be present and actively involved at a Sunday Mass. During the programme Fr. Patrick will designate a particular Mass for all candidates to be present at. (Sat 6.30pm, Sun 9.30am or 11.30am) This will enable those present at these masses to become aware of our young people and be actively involved in supporting them.

The Mass

This year we hope to have the celebration of the Eucharist as an *integral part of the programme* with our young people fully involved in the planning and preparation of the mass.

All of this will be *guided and encouraged by the catechists and by Fr. Patrick* who will be presiding at the Mass. The focus of this mass will be youth orientated helping our young people to be fully involved in experiencing the Eucharist and enabling them to *make the connections between what we celebrate at the Eucharist, the Mass, and their everyday lives.*

Charity or Service Project

All members of the confirmation group will be invited to be part of an existing project in the parish or Diocese, the local community or something of their own designing. *Our Catechists will guide them* in this, making sure the project they are involved in is interesting yet stretching them to take on-board something they may not naturally chose. An example of this may be 'The Passage' www.passage.org.uk which takes care of the homeless in and around Victoria station and the Cathedral. Or the 'Cardinal Hume Centre' www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk which houses young people helping them get jobs and permanent accommodation. A couple of local projects, which the parish supports, 'St Raphael's Edible Garden' www.raphaelsediblegarden.com

Issue Driven.

Rather than principles and values being the driving force of our youth it is issues. This is natural as this stage of development is about internalizing what is heard, mainly from parents, teachers, testing it to see if it fits for them; is it true for them. Thus building a set of values and principles to act out of, as they grow older.

The issues are the stuff through which they reflect on, the building blocks. These can be anything; mugging, poverty, racism, football, sexuality, relationships, parental authority, bullying, family breakdown, drug abuse, care of the planet, church, religion etc.The list goes on.

Image Conscious.

Developing our own image is always an important part of growing up. But in today's world of youth it is crucial. We, each of us, see around us four thousand different brands of consumer goods. And young people are very adept at reading these. They use image to mark out individual or group identity. The different groups have their own loyalty to particular brands and images. Getting it wrong reflects on their personality and standing within the group.

Uncertain.

The strand that runs through all youth culture is uncertainty. In a world where young people can create themselves from the ground up, their image, lifestyle and emerging values, choices and even sexuality is very important. Getting it wrong matters very much to them. That is why as a church, as a parish community we take our young people seriously. Even more we accept them where they are.

Our Confirmation programme, which this year has been re-structured, takes seriously the above observations allowing them to shape and form our aims for our young people in their journey of discovery in faith.



Programme aims.

Helping all candidates to understand the graces of the sacrament of Confirmation i.e. the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Knowledge, Understanding, etc. in their lives. And strengthening their commitment to Christ and the church.

Preparing them for adult and leadership roles in the Catholic, Christian and wider community including becoming aware of the needs of our world and discerning the signs of our times.

Helping them through adolescence and their growth towards maturity.

As mentioned above your role as parent or guardian is essential to the ongoing success of the programme. **How we are as adults**, our attitudes to life, **how we act** and speak, **how we talk** about our faith, **how we practice our faith**, is subtly picked up by our young people. It is these, more often than a structured programme, which will speak to our teenagers. If our faith and the practice of it means little to us and we put expectations on our young people, we will be viewed as hollow and dishonest and worse they probably won't tell us! They will look for other models for their lives.

So your role is important and your commitment to the ongoing faith formation of your young person is a vital part of the programme.

You rightly expect of us that we will do our very best for your teenager and so we rightly expect of you, given the demands of work and family life, to **do your best** and if there are difficulties and challenges, talk with us, and together we will work through them.

Your role in the programme.

Be supportive of your young adult, encouraging them to take responsibility for their involvement in confirmation. This might mean reminders of attendance, timekeeping etc.

Your presence at the parent's meeting is very important. There will be only one or two of these throughout the programme. Being present at these, besides the practical need of getting and receiving information, sends a powerful message to your young person that you are serious about your commitment.

Programme schedule leaflet. (Handed out with this booklet)

Why not put the programme schedule leaflet on your fridge door, or somewhere within sight as a constant reminder of dates and times and also of your commitment.

Prayer is a powerful means of support and we as a team and parish, privately and publicly, will be praying for all our young people. Having the programme schedule somewhere **visible in your home** will not only **remind you of the sessions** but also **encourage you to say a quick prayer for your teenager.**

Faith Formation always takes place within relationships, the family, school, peer groups and the gathered faith community at worship. Gathering with others, sharing our joys and sorrows, hopes and difficulties with a community gathered in prayer is a powerful support on our faith journey. **As Catholics our primary way of doing this is through the Eucharist, the Mass. Your presence**, as parents and guardians, **at mass is** not only an **important** part of your role on the confirmation programme but also an essential part of your own faith journey.

