

2023-24 Faith Formation

Dear Parents and Guardians,

First, let me start off by saying thank you for your dedication of passing on the Catholic faith to your child through TMP-Marian or the Faith Formation Program. As primary teacher, you are the foundation for your child's Catholic faith journey. We know that our religious education program at TMP-Marian or Faith Formation can never substitute for your work in forming the faith of your children at home, but we are still dedicated to supporting and helping you in the religious education of our youth.

It is important that you attend Mass and celebrate the sacraments regularly as a family. Weekend Mass times are as follows:

Saturday-4pm

Sunday-8am, 10am, 12:00pm-(Spanish), and 6pm

Confessions are available Thursdays-5pm, Fridays-12pm, Saturdays-3pm and Sundays-5pm.

More information about Mass attendance can be found in the Expectations section of the Handbook.

Secondly, I want to keep in communication with you throughout the year, so if you are new to TMP-Marian or Faith Formation, we use Flocknote to communicate with our parishioners on various events. If you are not receiving messages through Flocknote, please contact me to make sure the information is correct. There is no need to sign up for an account or download an app; I will set you up for this messaging system. I will send information via text or email. In addition, I will be updating our website, especially for First Eucharist and Confirmation, to provide you with more information that I may need throughout the year. Please visit our website at www.ihm-church.com, and look under the Faith Formation tab.

Thirdly, it is important that your child go to school or attend every Faith Formation session on time because our teachers have prepared valuable lessons about our faith to teach your child. Frequent absences or tardiness will make it difficult for your child to master the material designated for your child's grade level. If your child will be absent from Faith Formation, please call me, Jaclyn Brown, at 785.625.7643.

Finally, Confirmation is not the end of religious education for your child; it is only the beginning. The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation) are the initial steps of forming your child in the faith. They are fully initiated, which means to lead *"the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – his actions, his gifts, and his biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community."* (CCC #1309) In essence "the Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the baptized with the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the holy anointing to imitate Christ and to spread and defend the Catholic Faith." (Bishop John Brungardt, Catholic Diocese of Dodge City)

On behalf of the parish staff, I welcome you to a new year! Enclosed you will find a schedule and additional information specific to your child's grade.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Brown

Jaclyn Brown

Director of Religious Education (DRE)

The following requirements apply to both Faith Formation and TMP-Marian Students for the completion of your sacramental preparation.

Faith Formation Students

1. Attendance:

Attendance is very important for your child to be fully prepared to receive this sacrament. Your child should attend every Confirmation session and arrive on time. Your child is not to leave early or arrive late. **Please let any extracurricular activities know that your child is not allowed to miss Confirmation.** *When it comes to deciding which Wednesday night activity is more important, I pose the question of which activity is going to ultimately help your child's eternal salvation.*

If your child misses more than four classes, they will need to meet with the Pastor and/or the Director of Religious Education to discuss the continuation of preparing for the sacrament. No absences will be excused.

- Classes are (6:30 PM— 7:45PM) Wednesday Evenings.
- Missed classes will need to be made up by bringing completed lesson missed to the next class.

TMP-Marian Students-PLEASE NOTE!

We understand your Confirmation Formation is completed in a Catholic School setting. Your class attendance is tracked at school, **but the attendance of Mass, retreats, and other programs is tracked by Jaclyn Brown, DRE, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church.**

2. Sunday Mass:

As Catholics, we are obligated to attend Mass every Sunday [weekend] and Holy Days of Obligation. Those who fail in this obligation commit a grave sin (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2181*).

It is important that you attend Mass and celebrate the sacraments regularly as a family.

At IHM, Mass attendance will be taken for every student in Sacrament preparations (Grades 2 and 8) beginning the weekend of September 9-10. There are several ways we take attendance. Weekend Mass Attendance cards ([Grade 2-blue](#) and [Grade 8-Purple](#)) will be in the kitchenette next to the gathering space. Please have your student print their name on the card and place in the collection basket when passed to you.

Our Catholic Church is worldwide! Wherever you go, there is always a Catholic Church nearby. We would like to share with others the great and varied experiences of Mass that our families have, even outside of our parish. Another way we can track attendance is if you attend Mass in another parish/town, take a selfie at the church, being sure to capture in the background either the outside architecture, the inside with the sanctuary or some sort of window, statue, or art, *or even a picture with the priest!* Then, if you are willing to give us permission, we will periodically share in a Flocknote newsletter the various places our parishioners have travelled and the interesting places they have attended Mass. For those in Sacramental preparation classes, these pictures will also count as proof of your weekly Mass attendance.

A third way to track attendance is for you can also grab a signed bulletin if you are not one for taking selfies.

To assist you in finding a Catholic church wherever you travel, visit masstimes.org. You can email your Mass selfies at jbrown@ihm-church.com.

Weekend Mass times are as follows:

Saturday-4pm

Sunday-8am, 10am, 12:00pm-(Spanish), and 6pm

Holy Days of Obligation are as follows:

November 1-All Saint's Day

December 8-Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 25-Christmas

January 1-Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Please check the bulletin for Holy Days of Obligation Mass times!

Confessions are available Thursdays-5pm, Fridays-12pm, Saturdays-3pm and Sundays-5pm.

If you miss Mass for reasons other than illness or taking care of one who is ill, it is important that you go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, for those who have already made their First Reconciliation. If you need to miss Mass due to illness or taking care of someone who is ill please contact me by email, jbrown@ihm-church.com, or leave a voice message on Sunday, at 785.625.7643, ext 108.

3. Confirmation Retreat:

The Confirmation Retreat will be on **Saturday, February 17, 2024 from 9:30am-5pm** at Holy Family Elementary. We will end with the 4pm Mass.

If you miss the retreat, you will need to make up the retreat at the discretion of the Director of Religious Education and Pastor.

4. Stewardship Service Opportunities

Our parish embraces the stewardship model to promote active, engaged, and informed Catholics. It is our way of life. As you grow into young adults, there will be times in your life where it is necessary to give back to your community, church, and workplace. We promote stewardship from the time you become a member of the Catholic faith (at baptism). Now that you are entering into a time in your life where you are taking on more responsibilities, service to your church, community, and home is very important. You have chores at home because it is a way of life. Service to God is a way of life. Confirmation year is an opportunity for Candidates to serve in their community and spend some time exploring how their gifts and talents can be used within their parish community and family. There are many ways to get involved and serve in our parish, community, and at home.

A stewardship way of life involves the following:

- Becoming more and more aware that everything is a *gift and blessing*—that all that we are and have is a gift from God. This means *accepting the biblical truth that we own nothing*. Scripture reminds us that we come into the world with nothing, and we leave the world with nothing (Job 1).
- A stewardship way of life involves recognizing *God* as the sole creator and owner of all that we are and have and accepting the fact that we are merely the stewards or managers of God's gifts and blessings. Our job or mission is to manage and use wisely and responsibly all that God has placed in our care.
- As we grow into a stewardship way of life, we gradually develop a lifestyle marked by *generosity*. A life of generosity is a clear sign that we do in fact believe and accept the biblical truth that God owns it all. Conversely, when we hoard our gifts and talents, we assign ownership of our good fortune to ourselves and not to God, doing with them as we please.
- As we seek to develop a stewardship way of life, we are aware that one day we will have to account for our stewardship here on earth. How well did we use God's gifts to bless the lives of others?

In their Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, the U.S. bishops affirm: "*The Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.*"

Ways you can give back to your parish community, church, and family (**these examples are all done out of the**

generosity of your heart and without monetary compensation):

Church/Parish:

- **Usher:** The usher helps people to find a seat as they enter the church. They will also pass the baskets for the collection. They also pass out the song and missal books at the Spanish Mass.
- **Greeters:** Opens the door for people as they enter into the church.
- **Gift Bearers:** The gift bearers will bring up the gifts of bread, wine, and collection to the priest at the front of the church.
- **Altar Servers:** The altar servers are trained to serve the priest at the altar. They help the priest at the altar with various duties during the Mass.
- **Lector:** The lector reads the First and/or Second Reading.
- **Cantor/Musicians:** The cantor leads the congregation in song or playing an instrument.
- Helping at Parish gatherings by serving, picking up trash, setting up tables, taking down tables, etc.
- Helping with decorating the church for big celebrations like Christmas and Easter.
- **Attending Jr. CYO (middle school) and CYO (high school)**

Family:

- Helping your grandparents with grocery shopping or yard work.
- Babysitting your nieces and nephews.
- Helping your aunt and uncle with a project.

Community:

- Helping your neighbor out.
- Volunteering for to help with a school project.
- Volunteering at a nursing home, veterinary clinic, hospital, etc

There are numerous examples in all three categories that are not listed here.

5. Sponsors (Pre-requisite for the letter to the bishop):

The child will need to identify and choose ONE person that will stand as a sponsor. The Sponsor's primary role is to assist the candidate in preparing for Confirmation, to present the candidate for confirmation, and to help the confirmed person to live out his or her Christian faith fully. A sponsor should be of the child's choosing. The sponsor of who your child chooses should exemplify a practicing Catholic, meaning, frequenting the Sacrament of the Eucharist weekly, making a good Confession regularly, and living a life in accord with the Catholic Church. Just like the saints are our heavenly role models, the sponsors should be an earthly role model that your student looks up as an exemplary Christian person living the Gospel.

A sponsor must meet the following requirements:

- 1. Be a Catholic who is at least sixteen years old.**
- 2. Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.**
- 3. Be a person who leads "a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on."**
- 4. If married, marriage is a sacramental marriage and recognized by the Catholic Church.**
- 5. If single, sponsor cannot be living with a partner outside of a Catholic marriage.**
- 6. Not be a parent of the candidate.**

A new form is being used to determine the eligibility of a valid Sponsor. The form needs to be filled out by the sponsor and the parish priest where the sponsor resides. All sponsors, even those local to Hays, need to complete and return this form to the Director of Religious Education. **The parish seal is required on the form.**

6. Choosing a CONFIRMATION NAME (Pre-requisite for the letter to the bishop):

The Communion of Saints play an important role in our lives. Not only do the saints join us at every Mass that is celebrated, but we ask for intercessory prayer through them for our intentions to God. **The Saints, who have come before us have lived their life serving God and defending the faith. Just like we have earthly role models, such as parents, sponsors, sports figures, actors, actresses, etc., we also have heavenly role models who we should look up to.**

Biblically, many people changed their name. A new name has often signified a drawing closer to God and being sent on a new mission, as with Abram becoming Abraham (Genesis 17:5), Jacob becoming Israel (Genesis 35:10), and Simon becoming Peter (John 1:42). It has never been uncommon for priests and religious to take a new name upon entering the religious life, and Popes take a new name as well—the choice of Francis by our current Holy Father sent a clear message as to the kind of Pope he would be.

As you prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation you are asked to choose a Confirmation saint as your patron/patroness. At your Confirmation you will be confirmed using this name. You may choose your Baptismal name, select a name from the Bible, or a saint (canonized, blessed, or servant of God) of the Catholic Church. The saint you choose should reflect a devotion you have to the saint, virtues, or gifts to which you aspire, or the patron saint of certain gifts that are dear to you.

1. Read and learn about several saints and their lives before making your choice. You can choose a saint of either gender.
2. Pray about the saint you are considering.

After you decide on a name, use the space on the next page of this form to explain your choice. **For example**, if your name were Dominic Robert Mitchell, and you picked St. Joseph as your Confirmation name, **your Confirmation name would be Dominic Robert “Joseph” Mitchell.**

Your report should explain who your saint is and provide as much detail as you can about his/her life. Here are some questions that can help you:

- When and where was your saint born? Did s/he live in one place?
- What did s/he do for a living?
- What drew him or her to Jesus Christ?
- Did your saint become a priest or nun, or was he/she a layperson?
- Did your saint know other saints of the Catholic Church? Did they get along?
- What sort of obstacles did your saint have to overcome to attain holiness?
- Did your saint write any books? Has another saint written about your saint?
- When and how did your saint die?
- On what date is your saint celebrated by the Church? Is there a reason why it is this date?
- On what date was your saint declared a saint by the Church?
- What is your saint the patron/patroness of?
- What miracles are attributed to your saint?

Your report should also explain why you chose this saint. Here are some questions that can help you:

- What virtues or qualities does this saint have that you admire?
- Do you and your saint have any similarities?
- Are there other saints who were devoted to your patron saint?
- Is your saint the patron/patroness of something that matters to you?
- How can this saint help you live your life as a confirmed Catholic?

7. Letter to the Bishop (Pre-requisite to the interview)

Since the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by the bishop, the candidate writes him requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation. A packet will be given at a later date outlining what the bishop wants to hear from you.

You must have completed and turned in the Sponsor form and the Saint paper prior to receiving your letter to the Bishop packet.

8. Confirmation Interview

An interview between the DRE and the candidate will determine the readiness of the candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. This is the candidate's turn to shine in using the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to express what they've learned during the year and how they have applied it.

Confirmation Interviews will be set up in April/May. Your Letter to the Bishop must be completed and turned in prior to setting up your interview.

If your child does not meet all of these expectations, your child may not be properly prepared to receive the Sacraments. If this occurs, the Sacrament may be delayed.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Please refer to the calendar for dates of when practice is. One parent/guardian or sponsor must attend practice with their child.

- The Sacrament of the Confirmation Mass will be **Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at the 7pm Mass**. The Mass date is determined by the Office of the Bishop. The Director of Religious Education, along with Parish priest and other administrators select dates based on the parish calendar, then the ultimate decision comes from the Office of Bishop.
- **One Sponsor** is required for Confirmation. The sponsor will have a reserved seat with the candidate. Parents and all other family members will sit in unreserved sections of the church. Please arrive early if you want a close seat.
- On the day of receiving the sacrament, Bishop will meet with the entire Confirmation group beginning at 6:15pm. I ask that you and your child arrive at least **15 min prior to the meeting with the bishop so by 6:00pm**.
- A group picture will be taken following the Mass. In addition, the bishop will be available for individual pictures with your child following the Mass.
- **Dress Code:** Modesty is a virtue. Clothing for the celebration of Confirmation is as follows:
 1. Men- Dress pants, dress shirt, or Polo. NO JEANS, T-SHIRTS, SHORTS, CUT OFFS, TENNIS SHOES OR FLIP FLOPS!
(Optional: Suit, Sweater, Suspenders, Vest, tie)
 2. Women- Modest dress. Dresses and skirts are to be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. Dresses that show shoulders must have a sweater or jacket to cover. Dress pants and dress shirt is also acceptable. Tops and dress must not be revealing-no cleavage. NO JEANS, T-SHIRTS, SHORTS, CUT OFFS, TENNIS SHOES OR FLIP FLOPS!

Confirmation Checklist for Faith Formation & TMP-Marian Students

- _____ Attend Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation Masses and turn in Mass Attendance Card
- _____ Sharing your Time, Talent, and Treasure (Stewardship) with your church, community, and family
- _____ Attend Wednesday night Faith Formation classes (***Faith Formation Students***)
- _____ Attend scheduled IHM Confirmation Retreat: **February 17, 2024**
(Required of all IHM Faith Formation & TMP-Marian Confirmation students.)
- _____ Fill out the Baptismal Verification Form and turn in a copy of your Baptismal Certificate (If you were baptized at IHM we have a copy of baptism certificate. Only the Baptismal Verification Form is needed.)
- _____ Choose a Sponsor and turn in Sponsor Information form by: **March 1, 2024**
(Please have the form signed by Pastor of the Sponsor's Parish and Parish Seal Embossed on form.)
- _____ Choose a Confirmation Name (Saint Name) and turn in form by: **March 1, 2024**
(Please see guideline regarding researching and choosing a name)
- _____ Write **a Letter to the Bishop requesting Confirmation** and turn in to Jaclyn Brown
(More information about this in Spring—2024) **Due April 24, 2024**
- _____ Confirmation Interview-**April and May**
- _____ Attend Confirmation Practice: **May 18, 2024, 10am**, Confessions available.
- _____ Meet Bishop Vinke at 6:15pm prior to the Sacrament of Confirmation Mass: **May 22, 2024 7pm**
(Arrive by 6pm in the Little Theater)