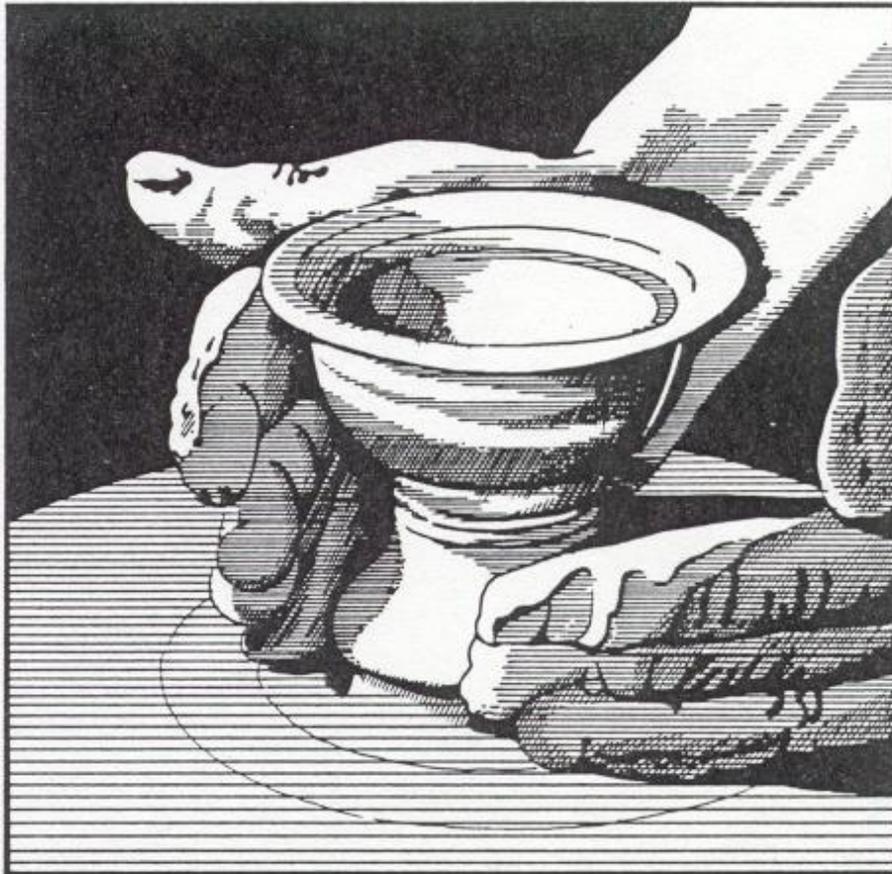


Saint Kateri



Shape me, Lord.

***Confirmation Preparation
Program Handbook***

**Saint Kateri Parish
Sparta, New Jersey
973-729-3021**

2018 - 2019 Program Year

Parish Staff

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Deacons:

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Philosophy of the Saint Kateri Confirmation Program

It is the goal of the Confirmation Preparation Program to nurture, enhance, and deepen the religious education process, which was begun in the elementary years, and bring it to the maturity level of a fully initiated adult Christian.

An emphasis is placed on understanding the past, living the present, and planning for the future as members of the Catholic Church.

The primary objective will be to understand and bring to life, through an experiential learning process, the mission Christ calls each one of us to live out as an apostle of His love.

Structure of the Saint Kateri Confirmation Program

The Confirmation Coordinator is in charge of the program, which is staffed by trained volunteers called catechists. These catechists are provided with educational opportunities and training at the parish, diocesan, and regional levels in order to ensure the best possible program for our young people.

To ensure the safety of our young people and in compliance with diocesan policy, all adult volunteers involved in the Saint Kateri Confirmation/Youth Ministry Programs have passed a background check. Additionally, all volunteers have attended the diocesan workshop, "Protecting God's Children" and have registered for online follow-ups.

All volunteers are supervised and report directly to the Confirmation Coordinator.

The Four Stages of Confirmation Preparation

The Confirmation Program supports the individual through four stages of development in preparing for, accepting and committing to full initiation into the Church. These stages are as follows:

Stage 1: Openness to the Spirit

During this stage, a general announcement is made inviting all individuals to consider their journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Those who are interested will then be asked to fulfill the following steps in order to proceed in the process:

- ▶ Attend the Parent and Candidate Orientation.
- ▶ Come to a personal decision concerning one's commitment to enter the next stage.
- ▶ Complete all necessary paperwork, forms and initial report.

Stage 2: Growth in the Spirit

Once one has accepted the invitation and has completed any objectives set forth in the first stage, the individual is then ready to enter the next phase of the program. This stage will comprise the next year and a half.

During this stage the individuals, now referred to as candidates, will complete most of their educational and service aspects of the program. Candidates will be involved in small group meetings, service projects, individual interviews, retreats, and special events during this time.

The Four Stages of Confirmation Preparation (cont.)

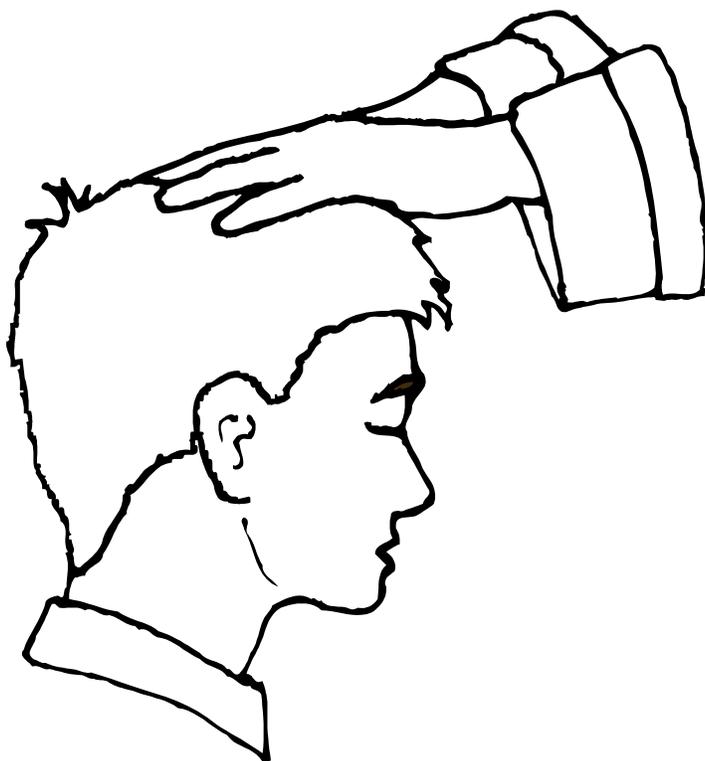
Stage 3: Discerning the Spirit

This stage is comprised of the last five to six months before the Confirmation Ceremony.

During this stage, candidates are asked to reflect prayerfully on the commitments and responsibilities of full initiation into the Church. It is during this time the candidate should determine for himself or herself if he or she is ready, willing and able to accept the commitments and responsibilities of full membership.

Stage 4: Embracing the Spirit

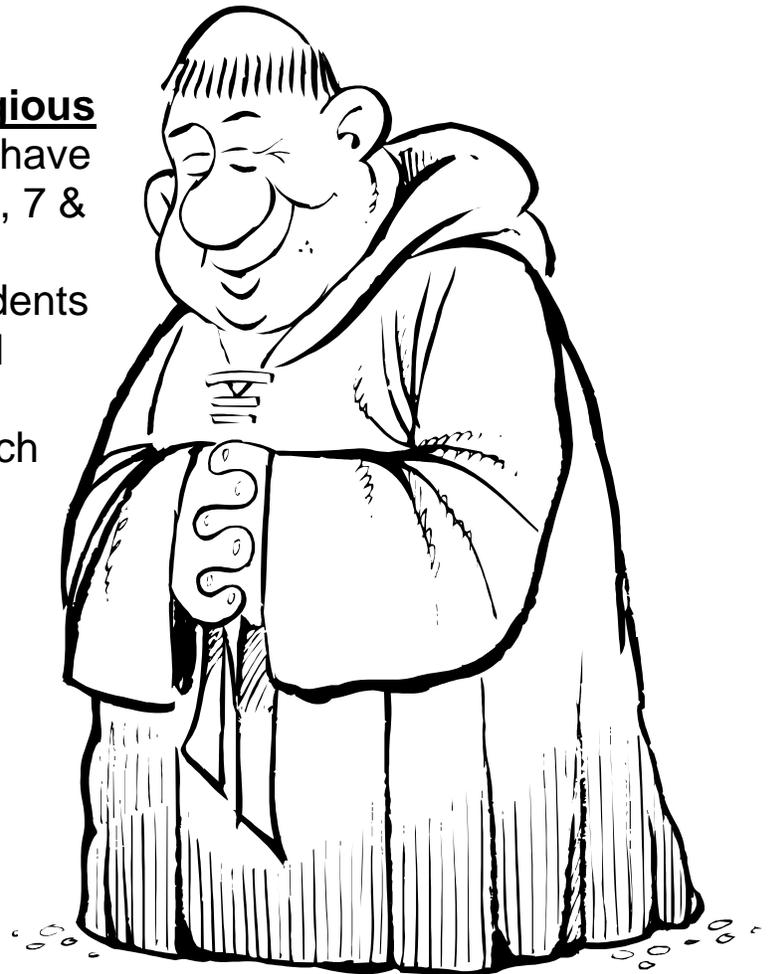
The final stage begins with one's commitment and acceptance of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and is ongoing. It is during this stage that the confirmed individual puts into practice the things learned during the formative stages and begins to actively fulfill the responsibilities of a fully initiated Catholic Christian.



Requirements for Acceptance

In order to be accepted into the Confirmation program, each candidate must meet the following criteria:

1. **Is a Registered Parishioner of Saint Kateri Parish:** The candidate's family must be registered parishioners of the parish in order to enter the program. This may be taken care of by visiting the parish center, by registering online or by obtaining registration materials in the church gathering area.
2. **Be of High School Age:** Each candidate must be a minimum of a freshman in high school. An exception is made if a perspective candidate was retained a year in the public or private education system, yet continued ahead in a religious education program.
3. **Has Completed the Proper Religious Education:** Each candidate must have completed a minimum of grades 6, 7 & 8 in a Catholic religious education program or parochial school. Students who have not completed such and wish to enter the program must complete certain prerequisites, such as: a summer home study course and an entrance test.



Program Components

In order to provide a well-rounded educational and experiential program for our young people, there are various components, which allow each young person to enhance her/his personal faith life.

SMALL GROUPS:

Phase I and II Candidates. Each candidate is assigned to a small group in which he or she will remain for the next two years. It is within the small group that most of the religious instruction will take place. Groups usually will not exceed twelve candidates.

ANTIOCH RETREAT:

Phase II Candidates. During the second year of the program, candidates are asked to attend an Antioch Retreat. This three day experience fosters a sense of community among the young people and brings to light the possibility of establishing a personal relationship with God. Currently, we offer one weekend Antioch retreat in the fall. If you cannot attend that retreat it will be your responsibility to find a retreat in another parish that you can attend.

SERVICE PROJECTS:

Phase I and II Candidates. In order to help our young people understand the important role that service to those in need plays in the life of a Christian, each candidate will be asked to participate in acts of Christian Service within their small groups and on an individual basis. Small groups are to complete at least two service projects over the two-year preparation period.

Program Components (continued)

SPECIAL EVENTS: Phase I and II Candidates will also be asked to participate in a number of special events throughout the program year. These events may include Advent and Lenten programs, special Liturgies or Days of Reflection. A listing of special events will be distributed with a calendar each program year.

INTERVIEW: The final interview allows time for each candidate to meet individually with the youth minister, pastor, one of the deacons or other designated member of the pastoral staff. These interviews are designed to encourage each candidate to fully explore their desire to be confirmed. Candidates will partake in one interview during their Phase II year during the reflection period.

REPORTS: All candidates will be asked to submit two, one-page typed reports. These reports are to help the candidates focus on their desire to be confirmed and to share their understanding of the sacrament they wish to receive.

Reports are due as follows:

“My Desire to Join the Program”

Due upon registration.

“My Name and Sponsor”

Due in December of Phase II year.

Report Outlines

All reports should be in paragraph form. Please **DO NOT** write answers as if these were individual questions. Instead, answer all five in the context of one paper. You may answer them in any order you desire. Papers should be one page and typed, using 12-point text. The papers should be double-spaced.

“My Desire to Join the Program”

At the time of your registration, please submit a one-page paper, which answers the following questions:

1. Why do you want to enter the Confirmation process?
 2. What are some things you hope will or will not happen to you during the preparation process of the Sacrament of Confirmation?
 3. What effect do you feel receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation will have on your faith and your life?
 4. If you had to define what Confirmation is, how would you define it? How would you also define The Holy Spirit?
 5. List any SPECIFIC questions you have about the Confirmation Preparation process.
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“My Name and Sponsor”

During the Phase II year, a one-page paper that answers the following questions should be submitted to the Coordinator of Confirmation:

1. What Confirmation name did you choose?
2. Why did you choose that name?
3. What are some important events that occurred in the life of the saint or other important Christian role model whose name you will share?
4. Who did you choose as your sponsor?
5. Why did you choose that individual to be your sponsor?

Schedule of Meetings

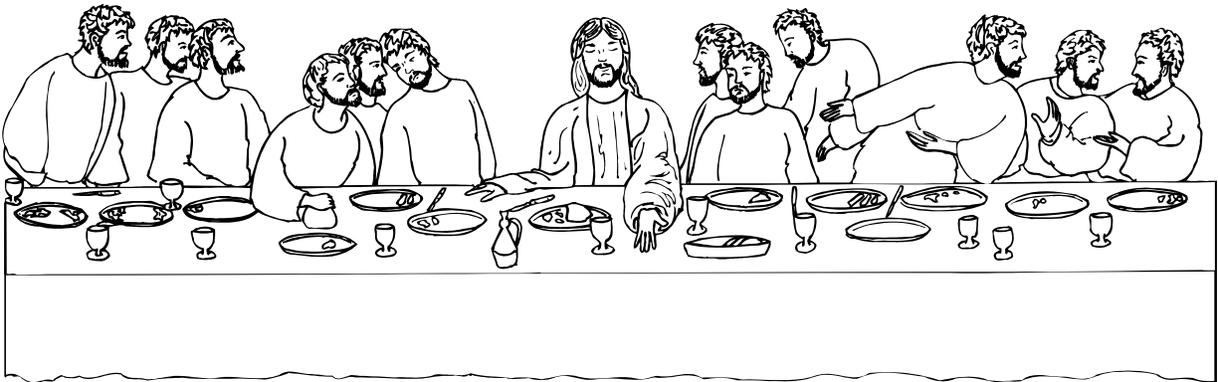
In order to provide flexibility, classes are offered on Sundays at 12:30-1:30 PM, 5-6 PM and 7-8 PM as well as Mondays 5-6 PM and 7-8 PM, provided we have catechists who volunteer for these time slots.

Small groups, usually no larger than twelve candidates and two catechists, meet on the grounds of Saint Kateri Parish.

Each small group leader will be responsible for setting their meeting night and the starting time. There are to be a total of twelve small group meetings in Phases I and ten small group meetings in Phase II at a length of one hour each. Additionally, there will be at least two large group sessions scheduled per year for both Phase I and Phase II.

Small group leaders will also determine, with the approval of the Confirmation Coordinator, service projects or “non-instructional” meetings for the group. “Non-instructional” meetings may include Sunday Mass, Advent or Lenten Services, the parish retreat or any other major events.

Each candidate will be given a schedule of meetings by their small group leaders.



Attendance Policy
2018-2019 Program Year

1. **ALL** activities that are listed in our program are included in this policy. Therefore, attendance will be taken at **ALL** small group meetings, retreats, service projects, and special events.
2. If a candidate is going to be absent, it is the **parent's responsibility** to contact by telephone or email at least one of the small group leaders **AND** the Confirmation Coordinator at cherylw@saintkateri.org/973-729-3021. A reason for the absence must be stated in the message if an answering machine is reached.
3. Candidates are expected to be at all small group sessions and all required events unless illness or a family emergency arises. **Sports events/practices, trips, weekends away, homework, and all other reasons are not acceptable for being absent.**
4. Upon the third absence, the candidate, his/her parent(s) and the Confirmation Coordinator will meet to discuss which course of action is to take place concerning make-up work or continued participation in the program.
5. Any candidate who misses more than two required events within a program year may need to repeat the same program level during the next program year.
6. A make-up assignment will need to be completed for **EACH** session missed regardless of reason. The assignment will be obtained by email from Saint Kateri Parish Confirmation Coordinator. The assignment is to be submitted to the Confirmation Coordinator within two weeks of the absence. Those who do not have internet access at home may contact the Confirmation Coordinator at 973-729-3021 to pick up a copy of the assignment in person.
7. Some events may not be compensated with a make-up assignment.

Fair Ability to Pay System

At Saint Kateri we attempt to give our young people the best Confirmation Preparation Program and Youth Program possible. We are able to do this because of continued cooperation and support of the program.

At the same time, we are faced each year with the rising costs of guest speakers, retreat expenses, general materials and administrative costs.

To address this situation, the Confirmation Program has implemented a program known as "Fair Ability to Pay". The Fair Ability to Pay system has also been implemented in the parish Religious Education Program.



Here is how the plan works:

- ▶ **Every family registering in Saint Kateri Confirmation Program is shown the actual cost of preparing each child in our program.**
- ▶ **Each family then determines its ability to pay a fair share of this actual "per-child cost".**

Some families may comfortably absorb the actual cost. For many others, it will mean reviewing the cost of their child's confirmation preparation against their other family financial obligations. Each family determines the amount of money they can pay toward the actual cost of their child's preparation.

Frequently Asked Questions about Fair Ability to Pay

Fair Ability to Pay System (cont.)

For the 2018-2019 program year we are anticipating an enrollment of 95 young people in the Confirmation Preparation Program. The cost of educating each child in our Confirmation Program is \$200.00 for the year.

How is the “per-student cost” calculated?

All expenses for the program are totaled and then divided by the number of children in our program. Program expenses include professional and secretarial salaries, taxes and benefits, classroom and office materials, utilities and all other related expenses. The per-child cost is greatly reduced by the many hours of volunteer service provided by our 50 dedicated catechists.

Will my children be excluded if I can't pay the full cost?

No. Every child will be given the opportunity to participate fully in the program regardless of payment.

Will you ask us our financial situation?

No. However, if you are asking for a reduction in the registration fee to less than \$150.00 per year, we ask that you write your request on the payment form along with an explanation of need. If necessary, the Confirmation Coordinator will contact you concerning this need.

Will others know what I am paying?

No. We keep all financial information confidential.

Won't some people be getting off easy?

The Fair Ability to Pay program asks that we trust the honesty of all of the members of our community.

Why is there an additional retreat fee if I am paying a “fair share” of the program cost?

Not all of our candidates preparing for Confirmation will attend a retreat each year. For those in Phase II, a mandatory Antioch Retreat Weekend must be attended. The \$100.00 retreat fee is the actual cost for an individual person to attend a retreat. Therefore, since this cost only affects those who attend a retreat, it is passed on to them.

How will we pay?

When registering online, you may choose to pay your balance in full using a credit card. If you wish to make partial payments you can do so by sending in a deposit check followed by monthly payments that you can afford.

General Information

Cancellation of Small Group Meetings

If a small group meeting is cancelled for any reason, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The Confirmation Coordinator will contact each catechist and inform them of the closing.
2. The catechist will then contact each candidate, leaving messages concerning the cancellation.
3. The Confirmation Coordinator will send a bulk Flocknote and email to all in the database for whom we have an email address, notifying them of the closing.
4. The catechist will reschedule all cancelled meetings and notify candidates of make-up sessions.

The closing of schools in the morning due to inclement weather does **NOT** automatically cancel small group meetings that evening. Many times the road conditions have improved by the evening hours allowing the meeting to be held. Please check with your catechist if this situation should arise.

Change in Meeting Place or Time

If for any reason there needs to be a change in the meeting place or time, you will be notified by the small group leader or the Confirmation Coordinator.

Also note that all small group class schedules can be downloaded from the parish website by clicking on the Confirmation/Youth Ministry tab.

Behavior Policies

We are very proud of the behavior of the young people who have gone through the program in the past. However, we wish to remind candidates that proper behavior and conduct is expected at Saint Kateri, at the retreat centers, and Confirmation Small Group service projects.

Any behavior or conduct problems will be addressed directly with the Confirmation Coordinator.

Three Strikes System: Behavior problems or in-attentiveness will be handled based on the following “three strikes” system:

1. The small group leader will speak to the candidate directly as to the problem and what must be done in order to correct the situation. **(STRIKE 1)**
2. If the situation continues, the leader will notify the Confirmation Coordinator who will meet with the candidate, his/her parent(s), and the small group leader (if possible) to discuss what must be done in order to resolve the situation. **(STRIKE 2)**
3. If the situation continues, the small group leader will notify the Confirmation Coordinator, who will schedule a meeting between the candidate and the pastor. At that meeting a decision will be made as to whether or not the candidate will continue in the program. **(STRIKE 3)**



High School Code of Conduct

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">† I understand that I should not arrive more than ten (10) minutes before the official starting time of the event or activity.† I understand that cigarette smoking is unhealthy and, therefore, prohibited at any Saint Kateri event.† I understand that I will not be in the possession of, or under the influence of any alcohol or drugs.† I understand that I am not to bring any weapons or any other material that might endanger those around me. If I am aware of someone else who is in possession of any dangerous item, I will make an adult aware of the situation.† I understand that there is to be no foul language or vandalizing during any Saint Kateri event.† I agree to respect the other individuals who attend Saint Kateri events. This includes my peers, the adult volunteers and the staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">† I agree to participate fully in both small and large group activities.† I understand that I am welcome to bring a guest to any Saint Kateri activity.† I understand that I am responsible for any guests that I bring to a function and I will take the consequences for any SK Code of Conduct rules that my guest does not follow.† I understand that inappropriate contact of a violent or sexual nature will not be tolerated.† I understand that I am responsible for the cleanliness of all facilities and will clean up my own mess.† I agree not to use photographic devices such as cameras and camera phones without the permission of a Confirmation/Youth Ministry staff member. This includes trips, activities, retreats, and small group meetings.† I understand that Saint Kateri recycles cans, bottles, paper, and cardboard. I will place all trash in its proper receptacle. |
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High School Code of Conduct (cont.)

- † I understand that I may be asked to pay for damages to the facility caused by my inappropriate behavior.
 - † I understand that I am responsible for reporting any of the above situations caused by others or myself to the adults in charge.
 - † I understand that I must arrange a ride to and from all Saint Kateri activities in advance, and I will not wait until the particular event has ended to find a ride.
 - † I understand that I must be picked up promptly at the designated dismissal times of the events that I attend so that I will not keep the adults waiting.
 - † I understand that once I have my driver's license, I am permitted to drive to Saint Kateri. I agree that I will drive in a responsible and safe manner. I also understand that driving to Saint Kateri is a privilege, and that privilege can be revoked at any time.
- † I understand that there may be specific rules and regulations based on the individual activity and I agree to abide by those rules. These may be in written form or may be verbalized by the adults in charge.
 - † I understand that if I do not follow the Code of Conduct, the consequences may range from a warning, parental notification, suspension from Confirmation/Youth Group functions or community service assignment. These consequences are based on the discretion of the Confirmation Coordinator, Youth Minister, and Pastor.



Phase I Curriculum Overview

Foundation – To provide the candidates with a basic factual structure from which to build their decision/commitment.

Church History

- † Provide a general overview of the major events in the Church's history since Pentecost.
- † Provide an overview of Church structure and hierarchy.
- † Provide a brief history of the first Christian communities.

Church Tradition

- † Provide a general overview of the use of sacraments in the Church.
- † Bring about an understanding of the liturgical colors and seasons.
- † Bring about an understanding of the parts of the Mass.
- † Provide a brief overview of the canonization process and expose the candidates to some of the saints of our faith.
- † Offer an understanding of Mary's role as having a special place in God's plan of salvation. Acquaint the candidates with some of the traditional Marian prayers and devotions.



Phase I Curriculum Overview (continued)

The Bible

Goal: To help the candidates gain an understanding of the Scriptures on which our Catholic Faith is based. Questions and topics explored will include:

- † How do we know the Bible is fact and not fiction?
- † How does one study the Bible?
- † How did the Bible come to be?

Jesus Christ

Goal: To present to the candidates the teaching of Jesus and to come to an understanding of how His message still reaches out to us today. Areas explored will include:

- † Jesus' Death and Resurrection
- † The Mission of Jesus
- † Jesus, both human and Divine
- † Jesus, The Teacher
- † Jesus, The Healer



Phase II Curriculum Overview

Peace and Justice – To provide an understanding that Christians must be active in their faith, reaching out to those in need. Candidates will come to an understanding that they are now the hands and feet of Jesus on earth.

The Call

- ✝ Investigate Christ's call to perform acts of peace and justice by examining His example in the Gospel.

Responding to the Call

- ✝ Explore the actions of those who have accepted Christ's call to justice.
- ✝ Explore the three main principles of Conflict Resolution:
 - Militarism
 - Just War Theory
 - Pacifism

Acts of Peace and Justice

- ✝ To foster within the candidates an understanding that acts of peace and justice are a necessity to being a Christian.
- ✝ Encourage the candidates to become involved in ongoing service projects as a response to their personal call to service.

The Holy Spirit

Goal: To enhance the candidate's knowledge of the Holy Spirit and to explore how the Spirit of God is calling them to service in this world as a Christian. Areas to be explored include:

- ✝ Who is the Holy Spirit and how does the Spirit work in our lives today?
- ✝ The Pentecost experience of the Apostles.

Dismissal from Public School Zorach V. Clauson 343U.S.306 (1956)

This U.S. Supreme Court case ruled that it is not unconstitutional for a public school student to attend religious instruction at a parochial school or church event even if this should disrupt the public school schedule.

By “public school schedule” it has been interpreted to include sporting events, band competitions, school plays, and any other public school sponsored event.

The Saint Kateri Confirmation/Youth Ministry Programs have notified the principals and superintendents of the following high schools of the law:

- **Sparta**
- **Jefferson Twp.**
- **Lenape Valley Regional**
- **Hopatcong**
- **Newton**

We have received notification from most of these districts that they will comply with the law concerning dismissal from ALL school events for religious educational purposes. They have also assured us that if any of their staff does not comply, action will be taken on the part of the school.

Any type of “punishment” for missing or leaving an event early IS NOT permitted and is in violation of the law. Therefore, school personnel cannot:

- Threaten the student in any way (example: removal from the team)
- Mock or make fun of child’s religious convictions
- Point out the reason why a student is not present or leaving early to other students or staff.
- Place a penalty such as “extra laps,” “benching,” or any other type of action, which is placed upon the student because of his/her absence or early dismissal.

If your family ever has a problem with a teacher or coach, please do not hesitate to call the Faith Formation Office.

Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved with their child's preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We ask Parents to...

- ✝ **Attend weekly Liturgy with their children.**
- ✝ **Discuss the material presented with their children on a weekly basis.**
- ✝ **Provide timely transportation for all meetings and activities.**
- ✝ **Be a faith role model for their children as well as the rest of the young people in the program.**
- ✝ **Attend parent meetings as they arise.**
- ✝ **Pray for their own children as well as the entire program.**
- ✝ **Consider becoming Catechists.**

Saint Kateri Parish Schedule of Masses

Saturday: 5:00 PM

Sunday: 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM, 11:30 AM, and 6:00 PM

There is no 6:00 PM Mass on Holiday Weekends

Weekdays: 8:15 AM

Holydays: Vigil Mass 7:30 PM, Holy Day 8:15 AM, 7:30 PM



