

Youth Confirmation Process 2023-2024

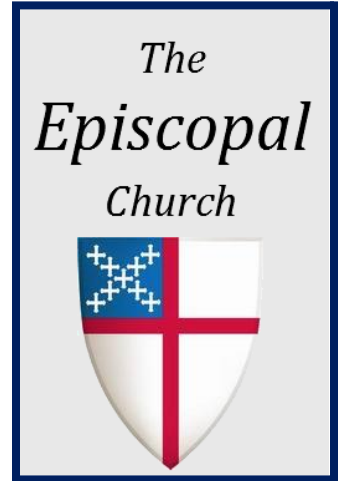
The Family Packet

St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA



We're honored and excited to walk with you through your confirmation preparation process. Whether you've been here long, or are new to this church community, we're glad you're here. We hope this family packet explains what you can expect during this process, but

we're always happy to answer any questions along the way. All of us at St. James's are looking forward to getting to know you better.



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Overview of Confirmation in the Episcopal Church

Confirmation is a sacrament, or a sacramental rite, in which the candidates “express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop” (BCP, p. 860).

A **sacrament** is an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace. Episcopalians recognize seven sacraments: the two great ones being Holy Baptism and Eucharist. Individuals who were baptized at an early age are given the chance to make a mature public affirmation of their faith, recommit themselves to the responsibilities of their baptism, and receive laying on



of hands by a bishop at confirmation (BCP, p. 412). Baptism precedes confirmation for youth; but as an adult, baptism and confirmation can occur at the same time.

Before you receive the sacrament of confirmation, it's important, and required by church canons, that "confirmands" (someone seeking confirmation) go through a preparation process. Preparation for confirmation allows candidates to discover the meaning of Christian commitment in their lives, and explore ways that their Christian commitment can be lived out. The candidates reaffirm their renunciation of evil, and renew their commitment to Jesus Christ. They reaffirm the promises made on their behalf at their infant baptism. Those present in the congregation also promise to do all in their power to support the candidates in their life in Christ.

The Episcopal Church's theology of confirmation has continued to evolve along with its understanding of baptism. Confirmation is no longer seen as the completion of Christian initiation, nor is confirmation your meal ticket or a prerequisite for receiving Holy Eucharist (or communion). Baptism is now understood as full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body the Church (BCP, p. 298). Accordingly, confirmation has been increasingly understood in terms of a mature, public reaffirmation of the Christian faith and the baptismal promises. Confirmation is not graduation from faith formation, but rather marks the beginning of mature participation in the mission and ministries of the church.

Confirmation at St. James's 2023-2024

St. James's is committed to offering a meaningful (*and fun!*) confirmation process. Here's what this process entails this year.

- Register online by September 18: [Register for Confirmation 2023-2024](#)
- Complete the online [Universal Permission Form](#)
- Pay \$100 registration fee online at [St. James's Episcopal Church](#)(details below)
- St. James's is returning to a fully in-person Confirmation curriculum this year. After several years with virtual components, our participants let us know they preferred in-person



better. During our sessions, we try to create different activities and ways for our youth to interact with the curriculum. Participants will attend 7 sessions, which primarily take place after the 9:00 am Sunday worship service. Participants will also be expected to participate in church life in other ways, as well as attending the kick-off event, Confirmation Camp, and the rehearsal/banquet.

- Youth may participate beginning as 9th graders. If this year doesn't feel like a good fit, you're welcome back any time later in high school.
- Any youth in grades 9-12 who participate must attend every session. A parent/guardian is required to attend the kick off meeting on September 24, as well as the rehearsal and banquet on May 5. Parents are the most significant influence in the faith formation of their children, so the church is committed to equipping parents with the knowledge, tools, and confidence necessary to foster a life of faith in their own home.
- Participants in the confirmation process must already be baptized in the Christian faith (any denomination). For information about getting baptized, please contact our director of children's ministry, Ashlee Ligon, at childrensministry@doers.org.
- At the end of the confirmation preparation process, it is the confirmand's responsibility, not the parents', to decide to be confirmed when the bishop comes to St. James's this year.
- The process will consist of 7 sessions on the following themes:
 - o The Sacraments
 - o Worship & Prayer
 - o CARITAS service night
 - o Episcopal Church 101
 - o The Church
 - o Love God & Love Neighbor
 - o Holy Trinity & Holy Week
- Minus the CARITAS session, all sessions will immediately follow the 9:00 service on Sunday from 10:15 am-12:15 pm in the Michaux House basement. The CARITAS session will occur Sunday night, time TBA.



- Attendance at all 7 sessions, the parent meeting, overnight Confirmation Camp, and the banquet are expected so be sure to mark your calendars early and plan accordingly. Dates for 2023-2024 are listed below.
- Besides attending the confirmation sessions and camp, confirmands will be expected to participate in church life in other ways (serving as an acolyte, usher, or lector, participating in youth choir or SYF, attending monthly community service offerings, etc). Confirmands must achieve five points by the end of confirmation. The point system will be explained at our first meeting.
- Our class content comes from the program *Confirm not Conform* (www.confirmnotconform.com) and other Episcopal based resources, such as the *Journey to Adulthood* curriculum.
- We will have an overnight Confirmation Camp at nearby Camp Hanover Friday, November 17 at 6:00 pm – Saturday, November 18 at 1:30 pm.
- In the spring, we will have a confirmation rehearsal and banquet on Sunday, May 5, 2024 from 5:00-7:00 pm. Confirmands, mentors, and parents are expected to attend.
- The bishop is *tentatively* scheduled to come to St. James's for confirmation on Sunday, May 19, 2024.



Mentors

Each confirmand will select a non-parent adult mentor (sometimes called a sponsor) who is willing to support them throughout the confirmation process. More detailed information about this will be explained in session 1. There's nothing for you to do at this point, so please wait until further instructions before asking someone to be your mentor. We just want to paint the picture of what's to come.

Youth will be expected to meet with their chosen mentor 3-5 times in-person or virtually over the course of the year. These meetings can happen anytime between now and confirmation Sunday, at a time and location that's convenient for you and your mentor. During these meetings, we encourage students to tell their mentor about their confirmation experience, ask their mentor about their

faith life/spiritual journey, and discuss any questions students may have. We also encourage students and mentors to go to church together if possible. A great opportunity to do this is during Holy Week.

These “meetings” can also be relaxed and fun – perhaps an outing to a farmers market, your next soccer game, or for ice cream. Mentors are expected to attend the Confirmation Rehearsal & Banquet, and Confirmation Sunday in the spring to “present” the confirmands to the bishop. If that’s not feasible, the confirmation leaders can stand in as your sponsor. Mentors will be provided with a mentor guide to equip them in this role.

Partnering with Parents

Parents are the #1 influence on their child’s faith formation process. This is why we stress the importance of attending worship services regularly as a family.

Don’t worry, the church doesn’t expect you to navigate this road alone. The St. James’s clergy, youth staff, and confirmation leaders are here to support you as parents, just as much as your child in the confirmation program. Please let us know how we can help you along this journey.

Confirmation is one piece of the Faith Formation puzzle

Confirmation is intended to be just one element of a bigger puzzle. If you’re committed to growing in your faith and having a deep impact experience, we encourage regular church attendance and involvement in community building experiences (like youth group or bible studies), and mission and outreach ministries.

- For Sunday worship schedules, visit www.doers.org.
- **Youth Groups** are a great opportunity for building relationships with peers and God, while putting your faith into action through service and mission. St. James’s youth group for 9-12th graders is called “**SYF**” or **Senior Youth Fellowship**. It meets most Sunday mornings. We like to cook, plan projects, complete service activities, share stories, and explore how God is



at work in the world around us. See www.doers.org for our detailed SYF schedule.

- In addition to confirmation St. James's also celebrates **one-time milestones** for youth including "**Blessing of the Keys**" for sophomores as they gain independence and are old enough to drive, as well as the "**Senior Blessing**" to celebrate our graduating high school seniors.



We also encourage you to follow us on Instagram @youthofsjecrichmond or on Facebook with our group "St. James's Youth Ministry"

Cost to Participate

St. James's is committed to providing a high-quality confirmation experience for our youth. To do this well, we must pay for confirmation supplies, overnight Confirmation Camp fees and chaperone costs, along with food costs for the kick off and banquet. This registration fee helps subsidize expenses for the entire year-long process.

Registration Cost: \$100*

Pay Online:

Payment can be provided online only using credit or debit card (*checks are no longer accepted*). Go to the church website www.doers.org > GIVING > ONLINE GIVING > Amount: \$100 > Gift Type: Give One Time > Giving Type: YOUTH MINISTRY PAYMENTS > Memo: Confirmation (youth's name) > NEXT. Then enter your payment information.

Payment due by September 18, 2023

*scholarships can be provided, please contact Katie at youth@doers.org

Tentative 2023-2024 Confirmation Schedule

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>
Virtual Information Session	August 20 from 7:00-7:30pm
Registration and Payment due	September 18
Confirmation Parent/Youth Meeting and Lunch Church with Clergy	September 24 (12:30-2:00 pm)
#1 The Sacraments	October 29 (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
Confirmation Camp/#2 Worship & Prayer	Nov 17-18 (6:00 pm Fri – 1:30 pm Sat)
#3 CARITAS Service Night	December 10 (time TBA)
#4 Episcopal Church 101	January 21 (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
#5 The Church	February 18 (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
#6 Love God, Love Your Neighbor	March 3 (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
#7 Holy Trinity and Holy Week	April 14 (10:15 am-12:15 pm)
Rehearsal and Banquet	Sunday, May 5 (5:00-7:00 pm)
Bishop Visit & Confirmation service	Sunday, May 19, 2024 at 9:00 am (tentative)

Confirmand Name: _____

Confirmand Participation in Church Life

As described earlier, preparation for confirmation allows candidates to discover the meaning of Christian commitment in their lives, and explore ways that their Christian commitment can be lived out. In order to help you explore ways to live out your Christian commitment, we are asking you to complete six activities in our Church's life. These activities can be the following: serving as an acolyte, lector, or usher, attending SYF, singing in youth choir, serving our community through a Doers Doing activity, participating in Youth Sunday, or helping out at an intergenerational church event. Below, please list the dates and type of your participation. Katie Ricard will verify through attendance sheets. This list must be turned into Katie on May 5, 2024 at the Rehearsal/Banquet. Please contact her with any questions.

Finally, five activities are the expectation, but please know you are welcome to do more!

Date of Participation	Activity