



2023 Orientation Handbook

Confirmation at All Saints'

Here at All Saints' we take seriously the privilege we have to walk alongside teens as they mature into young adults. Growing up comes with all kinds of new responsibilities and expectations. We want to equip our young people for a lifelong journey of faith that will provide them with valuable tools for making hard decisions, developing their spirituality, and putting their faith to work as members of God's Church. That's what **confirmation** is all about.

A Milestone Experience

This spring, 8th graders and older at All Saints' will be invited to participate in **Confirm Not Conform**, a program designed to help teens build community and grow in their faith through a series of interactive seminars, field trips, and the opportunity to build relationships with an adult mentor at All Saints'. The program will culminate with the annual visitation from the Episcopal Bishop of Atlanta and confirmation ceremony on May 21, 2023.

The Freedom to Choose

When infants and young children are baptized, their parents and godparents promise to nurture them in faith and commit them to the way of Jesus—a life characterized by prayer, forgiveness, service, justice, and love. At confirmation, teenagers are invited to choose this way for themselves. All along the way, we emphasize that it is their decision. At the end they can decide whether or not they want to participate in the ceremony and actually be confirmed. No one is required or forced to be confirmed. It is not uncommon for youth to decide not to be confirmed. We simply ask that they bring their whole selves to the program and commit to participating fully. Oftentimes the youth who decide not to be confirmed are the ones who actually get the most out of the experience.

Expectations: Presence and Participation

Confirmation is a serious endeavor, and in order to benefit most fully from the experience, youth are expected to participate as fully as possible. At the same time, we recognize the demands of school, extracurriculars, and athletics in modern life. Ultimately, we expect that each participant will do their best to attend each session. A **maximum** of three absences will be permitted with reasonable cause. Please let Hope know if you need to miss, so that you can get caught up with the materials.

- We also ask that youth attend at least **two** of the following in addition to the Confirmation Overnight:
 1. **At least 3 SNLs or Attic Invasions**
 2. **Ash Wednesday Service**
 3. **Maundy Thursday Agape Meal and Foot Washing**
 5. **Easter Vigil for the City**
 6. **Happening High School Weekend or New Beginnings Middle School Weekend**

Calendar

Saturday, January 20, 6pm in The Attic
Confirmation Overnight Retreat

Sunday, January 22, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 1: Introduction

Sunday, January 29, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 2: Where Do You Stand: The Gospel According to Whom

Sunday, February 5, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 3: Heretics R Us

Sunday, February 12, 10:15am in The Attic
Join Formation in Action for The Monthly Service Project

Sunday, February 19, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 4: Scripture: A Mad Dash Through a Good Book

Sunday, February 26, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 5: Teach Us To Pray: The Lord's Prayer

Sunday, March 5, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 6: Tradition: The Nicene Creed

Sunday, March 12, 10:15am in The Attic
Join Formation in Action for The Monthly Service Project

Sunday, March 19, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 7: Priest Check-In-Let's Ask Questions!

Sunday, March 26, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 8: Faith in Action: Pain to Power

Sunday, April 2, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 9: Faith in Action: How Can We Help

Sunday, April 9
Easter Sunday: Attend an Easter Service

Sunday, April 16, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 10: Teach Us To Pray: The Sacraments

Sunday, April 23, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 11: Where Do You Stand: The Power to Choose

Sunday, April 30, 10:15am in The Attic
Session 11: Stump the Priest: Ask Anything!

Sunday, May 7, 10:15am in The Attic
Join Formation in Action for The Monthly Service Project

Sunday, May 14, 10:15am in The Attic
Final Class Breakfast! (Chat Through the Confirmation Service)

Saturday, May 20, 6:00pm in Ellis Hall
Confirmation Rehearsal Dinner

Sunday, May 21, 9:00am
Confirmation Service

Mentorship: Deadline March 5, 2023

Parents and youth are invited to think about a trusted adult, non-family member, at All Saints' who you would like to ask to be a Confirmation Mentor. It could be a previous Sunday School teacher, friend of the family, or even a godparent. Information on selecting a mentor is provided below.

If no one comes to mind for you, please contact Hope, and she will assist you in finding a mentor from a pool of great candidates. She is also available to help locate contact information for current parishioners.

Whether inviting a mentor of your own choosing or working with Hope to select a trusted mentor, it is the youth participant's responsibility to reach out to that person by Sunday March 13 and fill out the mentor selection form that can be found at allsaintsatlanta.org/connect-grow/youth/confirmation-2022/

Guidance for Parents & Youth in Selecting a Mentor

The *CnC* program calls for each participating youth to have a mentor **from All Saints'**—a non-family member who will talk with the participant about issues of faith or life in general, answer questions (when they can), attend events, and serve as a source of encouragement and support. This is an important part of the overall *CnC* program, so good mentor recruitment is essential.

All ages of adult over the age of 21 are appropriate. Past experience has shown that members of the congregation with more life experience often make the best mentors, but do not discount younger adults.

The three critical qualities a mentor must possess are:

- **Curiosity.** A mentor should be willing to learn along with the youth; be interested in their lives and interests; be able to try new things—whether a youth's favorite food or a favorite band—and be more interested in having conversations than delivering lectures.
- **Reliability.** We all have busy lives, but there's not much worse than an adult flaking out and forgetting to meet with the youth. Even adults who travel a lot for work can be great mentors, as long as they make the effort to set up sessions with their youth and show up for them.
- **Discretion.** For any real relationship to grow, youth must know that their mentor takes them seriously and respects their privacy. Mentors should demonstrate discretion in discussing their relationship with the youth and what has been shared.

Draft Message to Mentor

Dear _____,

My name is _____, and I am in the ___ grade at _____ School. *You may wish to include additional information about yourself.*

This spring I will be participating in a new program for youth at All Saints' called *Confirm not Conform*. It's a confirmation program that invites and encourages teenagers to explore our faith by asking questions, challenging assumptions, and discovering what we truly believe.

As part of the program, each of us is required to find an adult mentor in the parish who can help teach us and pray for us along the way. I am reaching out to ask if you would consider being my mentor.

There are four main expectations:

- Schedule at least two meetings with me between now and May to discuss questions of faith and what it means to be part of the church. The church staff will provide some discussion guides and conversation starters.
- The program ends in the spring with a Rehearsal Dinner and Celebration and the Confirmation ceremony itself. You would need to be present for both. The dates are:
Rehearsal: Saturday, May 9 at 6:00 p.m. at All Saints'
Service: Sunday, May 10 at 9:00 a.m. at All Saints'
- Attend as many of the additional events as you can. A schedule will be provided.
- Complete the required Safeguarding God's Children abuse prevention course.

The main thing I need from a mentor is a listening ear. You don't have to have all the answers and I don't expect you to!

To provide you with additional information, and answer any questions you might have, I'd also like to invite you to our Mentor Training and Breakfast,, scheduled for **March 26, 2023 at 9:00 a.m in the Attic**. It's a great chance to meet some of the other mentors and learn more about the program. Please also feel free to contact Hope Westervelt, Director of Youth Ministries, at hwestervelt@allsaintsaltanta.org with any questions.

Please let me know by two weeks from now if you would be willing. I hope to see you soon and, in the meantime, I'll hope you'll prayerfully consider this opportunity.

Peace,
Your Name

Commitment Pledge: To Be Signed on January 22, 2023

I pledge to participate in the *Confirm not Conform* Program, to abide by its requirements, to bring an open mind and heart to all sessions and events, and to treat all those involved in the program with respect.

As part of the program, I also commit to:

- participate fully in youth confirmation at All Saints';
- Bring an open mind and heart to all sessions and events;
- treat my leaders and peers with respect,
- Attending as many of the Sunday morning confirmation sessions as I can; and to complete the weekly responses to the best of my ability
- Participating in the Confirmation Banquet and Celebration
- Attending the confirmation service, whether or not I choose to be confirmed, as a show of support for other members of the program

In return, the community commits to:

- Listening to my questions and concerns with open minds and hearts;
- Taking my contributions seriously and treating them with respect;
- Exposing me to the fundamental questions of faith and exploring them with me;
- Providing a mentor who will share their own faith experiences and questions, and respond to mine;
- Offering help when I need it;
- Keeping me in their prayers.

Signed in the presence of my faith community on January 22, 2023.