



Confirmation Year 2 Retreat

Friday, February 23 5:00 PM to Sunday, February 25, 2024 3:00 PM

Parent Information Packet

Retreat

The Confirmation retreat is for St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Cecilia candidates in their second year of Confirmation preparation. We will focus on drawing closer to God through the sacraments as well as discerning His call in our lives. We will touch on themes of grace, prayer, living differently, and putting the Lord first.

The retreat hinges on the fact that God calls us through the Bible and the Church to live differently: *to live differently than before we encountered the Lord and to live differently than societal norms.*

We do the retreat over a weekend to allow the students to step away from daily stress, obligations, and appointments and truly be open to God's presence.

Retreat Team

A team of upperclassmen, college students and adults serve as the retreat team.

Retreat Location and Start/End Times

The retreat will start on Friday, February 23 at 5 PM with an optional Knights of Columbus Fish Fry in the St. Cecilia School Gym. Please let us know if you would like to have dinner with us. If you do not want to have dinner with us, then the retreat will officially start at 6 PM in the St. Cecilia School Gym.

We will travel by bus to the Y-Camp in Boone on Friday evening.

The retreat ends on Sunday, February 25 at 3 PM at St. Cecilia.

Retreat Attendance/Participation

We strongly recommend students to attend the entire retreat. We would like to emphasize how much this specific retreat can impact your child's personal relationship with God and the Church.

We do understand some students are unable to attend their Confirmation Retreat due to various school and community obligations. If your child is unable to attend the retreat because of a serious conflict, please let us know. Depending on the circumstance, your child may be able to attend part of the retreat. Our goal is to work with your child to have a retreat experience to deepen their relationship with God. Please contact Kayla Stinga and Susan O'Brien at amesconfirmationretreat@gmail.com with any questions.

Our intent is for every candidate to experience a retreat where they can be truly present and not worry about what they are missing.

Retreat Fee

The recommended participation fee to help cover costs of the retreat is \$125. Scholarships are available at partial or full, please contact Kayla.

Packing List

- Pillow, sleeping bag, blankets labeled with your student's name on them.
- Clothes, toiletries, towel for 2 nights, 3 days
 - Comfortable, warm, modest, and appropriate clothes are encouraged.
- Flashlight
- Bible & rosary
- Winter Coat, Gloves, Hat, Snow boots
- Water bottle
- *Candidates in possession of illegal substances or weapons will be sent home. Parents will be asked to pick up any minor not in compliance with behavioral expectations from the retreat center.*

TOP SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL/SURPRISE FOR RETREAT ATTENDEES

Wheat Letters

We will continue the tradition of wheat letters. A wheat letter is a letter expressing your support, affirmation and any inspiration for your Confirmation Candidate. It is a chance to tell them how much you love and care for them. It is a letter of your continued prayers for them. You can share some meaningful story or memory that reflects your relationship with the Confirmation Candidate. You can share how your faith has influenced yourself and encourage them to continue learning about our faith and deepening their relationship with God.

We would like each candidate to receive at least 10 wheat letters. Wheat letters can be from family near or far, from friends, neighbors, or others that care for the Confirmation Candidate to show how much they love and care for them.

Please only letters, *no food or gifts* for the Confirmation Candidate.

Please submit wheat letters by **February 21, 2024** to ensure delivery to candidate at the retreat. If after this date, we cannot guarantee the letter will get to the candidate during retreat. Please include your candidate's first and last name with the letters.

You can submit letters in 3 ways:

1. Email letter to amesconfirmationretreat@gmail.com where you will receive a confirmation email that is has been received & printed out
2. Mail to 2900 Hoover Ames, IA 50010 (C/O Confirmation Retreat)
3. You may collect them and hand them to a retreat team member when dropping off your son/daughter for the retreat. *

*If you choose this last option, please let Kayla and Susan know you are doing this and please be sure to have collected at least 10 letters for the candidate. Thank you!

Wheat Letter Examples

Josie,

You are a strong young woman, and I'm proud to call you my Goddaughter! You are kind, loving, and spirit-filled. You should always follow your heart because Christ dwells in you. For me, watching you prepare for Confirmation and choose to follow Christ is an incredible gift. God's grace has been with you since you were baptized, and it has been an amazing journey watching you grow in Him. Remember that this is an adventure. There is a risk, and there is a glory. My favorite thing about being Catholic is praying with scripture and receiving Jesus in the Eucharist. This is when I feel the most alive in my faith. No matter where you go, you are a witness of what you believe. Life is a beautiful gift! Lean into your faith, instead of running away from it. I will always support you as you choose to follow Christ. My prayer for you is that you find who you really are in the God who loves you more than anything. I know the last few years have been hard as you've tried to find friends you can rely on. Honestly, I never found a solid friend until I went to college. Jesus was my friend through it all because I could be myself and discover who I truly was without feeling pressured to pretend in order to fit in or feel like I belong. I know I belong to God and this is all that matters. My prayer is that you will also find that eternal acceptance in Christ. I am proud to be a part of your journey, and I love you very much.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35-39

Your Godmother, Janice

Dear Mark,

I hope you're enjoying your retreat, and that you have encountered God Himself in a very special way this weekend. I will be praying that this weekend will be one to remember, one that will bless you for years to come. Mark, you are already such an amazing young man of God. The way that you see a need and jump to meet it is such a good example to those around you, me included. I am always so impressed with your grace and your gentleness. I am so thankful for the ways that you have been the hands and feet of Christ in our family. Our boys look up to you; you are their superhero.

I don't know what God has in store for your life. But this one thing I know: He is faithful. This has been the greatest source of hope and joy in my life: That He is faithful. I pray that you'll know that this weekend and that the Sacrament of Confirmation will grant you the grace of never forgetting it. God is enough for you, Mark, no matter what your life brings. He is sufficient. There will be crazy, joyous adventures along the way, things you can't even begin to image that God has planned especially for you. There will, no doubt, also be tragedy and heartbreak such is life in a fallen world. But we have this hope as an anchor for the soul (Hebrews 6:19). We know that He is a God that provides.

There is nothing better than to live in this hope, in the peace of knowing that God is enough for you. So this is my prayer for you this weekend that you would see, hear, and feel God profoundly, and that you would trust that He is enough. Remember that He is always faithful.

I hope I get to continue to be a witness to the ways God is working in your life, Mark. It is my job to pray for you now and always.

In Christ,
Andrew