St. Leo's Parish Community
2410 S. Blaine St. Grand Island, NE 68801

"Come and See,
And they left their nets and followed..."
Matthew 4:18-20

June 30, 2026

Hello high school juniors and families!

My name is Rita Hemmer and I am the director of youth and young adult ministry for St. Leo's. You are invited to an experience of questioning, exploring and understanding what it means to be who you were made to be.
Who are you, really? What is your purpose in this world? Is there really God and if so, how does God fit in your life?

The Confirmation preparation program at St. Leo's is geared towards your questions and challenges with an emphasis on what it means to belong to God's family. This letter contains pertinent information for you about upcoming plans for the sacrament of Confirmation for the graduating class of 2028

All current **Juniors that are registered at St. Leo's begin the preparation for Confirmation this fall, beginning with a parent / candidate orientation on Sunday, September 13 at 7:00 p.m.** The tentative date for the celebration of Confirmation will be Sunday, August 22, 2027.
A tentative schedule is enclosed.

- "**Why do I have to be Confirmed?"**
  - This is a great and expected question that cannot and will not be answered with, "Just because."
  - During Confirmation preparation at St. Leo's, juniors are invited to **explore, question, challenge and experience their faith.**
  - **Confirmation prep. sessions help explain the reasonableness of the existence of God, how to develop and build your relationship with God and what is your part in God's great creation.**

♦ In the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation,
⇒ "the *initiation* in the Christian life is completed so that believers are
- *strengthened by the power from heaven,*
- *made true witnesses of Christ in word and deed,*
- *and bound more closely to the church*" (from The Rites of the Catholic Church).

What does this even mean and why should you care. Come find out why this is a major and important step for our young people in their journey of faith.

The sacrament of Confirmation completes the three sacraments of initiation:
#1 **Baptism**—You were Baptized and became an adopted child of **God The Almighty Father;** you received God, The Holy Spirit for the first time and a lot more!
#2 **Eucharist**—You prepared and receive **God, The Son, Jesus** in the Eucharist, who empowers you with the grace to live out God's life for you!
#3 **Confirmation**—At your Confirmation, you will be strengthen in **God, the Holy Spirit** and the gifts that will enable you to answer the call to follow and serve Christ!

In a small comparison, it is kind of like, now you are on the junior varsity of your faith. At the sacrament of Confirmation, you receive the grace to move up to the varsity team! The benefits are too many to mention here. That is why we prepare for this part of your faith journey.

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To prepare for and understand this important sacrament, youth will become Confirmation candidates at the start of the program. The candidates will attend preparation **sessions (not classes)** on specific Sunday evenings, beginning in September and continuing through April (there are no sessions in December).

There will be a break during the summer and we will reconvene with a **retreat tentatively set for *August* 6-7, 2027**. The sacrament of Confirmation is tentatively set for August 22, 2027 at 2:00 p.m.

There will be a **candidate / parent orientation gathering on Sunday, September 13, 2026 from 7:00 p.m.—8:15 p.m.** in the parish hall. Attendance at this orientation is intended for candidates and ALL parents to be introduced to the Confirmation preparation process. It is very important for all parents and candidates to attend as we will explain more completely the Confirmation preparation process and complete registration of the candidates. If either parents or candidates are not able to attend, please make arrangements to meet with me before we begin the preparation process.

At the candidate / parent gathering, we will ask for a $15.00 registration payment to cover the cost of the book we use. We will also ask for a $15.00 payment for the Confirmation retreat fee. The total of $30.00 will be collected at our September 13th gathering.

Adult leaders needed! Do you have a love for God and young people? Are you willing to learn more about and increase your faith right along side of some amazing young people? There will be 26 potential confirmation candidates next fall, which makes me very excited to share my love of Christ and the Catholic faith to each and everyone of them. However, it takes a community of leaders and I cannot do this all by myself. As we share with our candidates what it means to be church, we need adults to show what it means to be church. This can be done by using your gifts to share in the Confirmation preparation. It would be optimum to have five to six adult leaders. Being an adult leader is not hard, is very rewarding and you do not have to have the Catechism of the Catholic Church memorized to help out (thank goodness or else I'd be in trouble). All that I ask is for you want to grow in your relationship with God, practice your faith and have a desire to see our youth grow in relationship and understanding of Christ. Please contact me at St. Leo's for more details about leadership opportunities.

I will send out reminders prior to the September 13th gathering. Please contact me at any time if you have suggestions, comments or questions. I look forward to meeting all of you and getting to know you better as we explore our faith.

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