



The Episcopal Diocese of Newark

31 Mulberry Street, Newark, NJ 07102 • 973-430-9900 • www.dioceseofnewark.org

Equipping congregations... Empowering people... Engaging the world... with the hope and justice of Jesus.

A letter to Chaperones about what to expect at the Confirmation retreat:

Chaperones are essential to the success of these retreats. We ask churches to send one chaperone for every 5-7 youth who attend the retreat. We realize that many adults don't enjoy leading groups of teens and sleeping on the floor at a church, but this form of accompaniment is an integral part of shepherding and mentoring youth through the confirmation process. When youth come with a chaperone that they know, they have a familiar face to turn to if they get nervous or ill. Chaperones who know their young people are able to monitor any personality issues or group dynamics that may arise with their youth. The youth also know that if they misbehave someone who knows them (and perhaps their parents) will know sooner rather than later.

If the chaperone is also a confirmation instructor he/she knows what the youth have learned and what is yet to come in the curriculum. They can help the youth process what they experience at the retreat and have a better idea of what items to emphasize during the remainder of their preparation process after the retreat. While we don't require churches sending fewer than 5 youth to send a chaperone, please consider what benefits your youth may miss if they don't come with an adult from their church. In addition, bear in mind that your youth must turn to adults whom they don't know if they get nervous or ill.

You may be asked to help out with simple tasks during the retreat. I hope you will feel moved to do so because we need chaperones to help implement the program we have organized for the youth. This includes enforcing the norms (rules) as they are stated on the registration form and at the beginning of the retreat; leading some games; helping to set up activities and meals; and getting the youth to settle down at bedtime and get up promptly in the morning. That said, we truly need the chaperones to reinforce the design we set up. We have had adults who switch their youth out of groups because they wanted them to be with their friends. This does not help the youth get to know new people or stretch themselves beyond their comfort zones. Moreover, some adults have been quite rude when the young people who are on staff for the retreat respectfully remind the adults that the groups have been set up intentionally and that the youth should stay in their designated groups. This is clearly not helpful and undermines the leadership development that we work so hard to promote in this diocese.

You and your confirmands should arrive at 7:00PM on Friday evening. Starting on time is very important so please make every effort to arrive punctually. Please make sure you eat dinner before you come because dinner will not be served. You may also wish to shower before arriving as showers will not be available. The retreat will end on Saturday at 12:15PM. Breakfast will be served on Saturday.



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Here are a few things you should all bring to the retreat:

- A sleeping bag (and/or air mattress at St. Elizabeth's retreat), sheets, blanket and pillow
- Modest pajamas
- Toiletries, a toothbrush and a washcloth
- Whatever medication you may need
- A change of modest clothes for Saturday.

Confirmands should **NOT** bring these things:

- Electronics (mp3 players, eReaders, games, etc.)
- Cellular phones
- Money or Jewelry

The purpose of going on a *retreat* is to remove oneself from the everyday concerns of life on focus on whatever the theme of the retreat is. Therefore, we will not have any "in & out" at the Confirmation Retreats. If youth have another commitment (like sports practice, music or language lessons, etc.), we ask that they forego that for the weekend and allow themselves to really experience what a *retreat* is. They may not skip Friday night, leave early Saturday or leave and come back later. It disrupts the flow of the retreat and the community building and requires adults to keep track of who should and shouldn't be there at every hour. If a confirmand is unable to attend the entire retreat on this date please register him/her for a different date that works better for his/her schedule.

You can also arrange for your confirmands to receive a blue or black Diocese of Newark polo shirt, black diocesan baseball cap or travel mug as a way of congratulating them on taking this important step in their faith journey. The polo shirts are available in sizes youth large and adult small through 3XL for just \$20 each. The diocesan baseball caps cost \$10 each. The diocesan travel mugs cost \$10 each and three mugs cost \$25. Proceeds from these products go to support Christian formation (including Youth Ministry) in our diocese. If you would like to order these items for your group, please contact me by Wednesday the week of your retreat and we will be sure to have them for you at the retreat..

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (973) 430-9991 or e-mail me at [gjacobson@dioceseofnewark.org](mailto:gjacobs@dioceseofnewark.org). We look forward to seeing you you're your Confirmands at the retreat!.