

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to ask you to participate in one of our retreat activities. As part of our Reconciliation service, the Candidates are presented with letters of affirmation from the people who love them and who have helped them on this journey. It is a very meaningful way for the candidates to end the celebration.

Please give some thought to your relationship with your child and write a letter of love and encouragement. Please take the time to express your feelings, what gifts they have, how they have blessed you, and if necessary, words of forgiveness and support. You can remember a story about a happy time in your relationship, or you might want to share what your faith means to you. Please solicit others to join in this campaign, siblings, close friends, sponsors and anyone who would like to support them. We would like to have at least **three** letters per candidate to give them on retreat. It would be hard to do this even if one of them doesn't have a letter.

Please seal your letters in an envelope, write the candidate's first and last names on the front and your name on the back of the envelope. Place that envelope and the others in a larger one addressed to me. Please deliver it to us by our last session before the retreat, Nov. 20.

Here are some hints to help you with the letter:

1. DO NOT tell your son or daughter about the letters. This is a surprise!
2. Make sure everything you say is POSITIVE. This is a time to AFFIRM your youth, not a time to point out areas for growth.
3. Plan a time where you can really think about the letter. These letters touch them deeply.
4. Do not send gifts or packages. The letters are more powerful than any material gift you could buy.

Thank you for taking the time to do this and encouraging others to do the same. They are deeply moved to read how loved and valued they are, even if they have heard you say it, reading it in this setting is an incredible highlight of the retreat for them.

If I can help you in any way, please call me at 707-763-1032 x 200.

Thank you for your participation. God bless you!

Louise Martin,  
Youth Ministry

P.S I will forward this letter to you by email if you request so you can send it to others. There are a few of you that pop back so email me so I have your accurate address:  
Louisemartin2@yahoo.com