

Confirmation Guide



Diocese of Grand Island

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CONFIRMATION

APOSTOLIC TIMES

The picture of initiation as described in the New Testament is anything but clear. We know that the word “Confirmation” is never used in the New Testament, rather the ritual we now call “Confirmation” is linked to Baptism. In Christian Baptism (Rom. 6; Col. 2:11 ff.); one is justified (I Cor. 6:11) on account of one’s righteousness; one is adopted as a child of God (Gal. 3:26-4:7; Rom. 8:12-17); one is anointed (2 Cor. 1:21 ff; I John 2:20, 27) with the Spirit (Acts 2:38; I Cor. 6:11-13; 2 Cor. 1:22) into the Messianic people (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-29); and all of this with a view to the “day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30; cf. John 3:5). Baptism in the N.T. is regarded as the foundation of all discipleship and Christian life (Acts 2:7-41). Baptism brings one into an already existing community through the working of the Spirit. Baptism, in its earliest theology, was performed for the remission of sins and the imparting of the Spirit.

The New Testament evidence of the relationship between Baptism and what we now call “Confirmation” is based on three New Testament texts: Acts 8:4-20, Acts 19:13-17, and Hebrews 6:1-6. Some scholars claim that from these texts it is clear that a laying on of hands for the imparting of the Spirit – performed after the water-bath and as a complement to this bath – existed already in the earliest apostolic times. But there are other scholars who say that these passages in Acts are exceptions to the normal reception of the Spirit at Baptism.

An early writer, St. Justin Martyr, records a ceremony that had developed around the simple act of baptism. Tertullian, another early writer, who dates from around the second and third centuries, wrote that Christian initiation included not only washing with water, “Baptism”, but also an anointing with oil. He went on to speak of a signing with the cross and the imposition of the bishop’s hands. Another writer, St. Cyprian, shows that Christian initiation ceremonies consisted not only of baptism with water but also the imposition of the bishop’s hands and the signing with the cross of the Lord.

About 215 A.D., St. Hippolytus wrote a work entitled *The Apostolic Tradition*. In this work we get the first pictures of the Church’s celebration of the gift and reception of the Spirit of Christ. He described the ceremony as follows:

A presbyter, “priest,” baptized the candidates who went down into the water with a deacon or with a deaconess in the case of women. The presbyter asked the one to be baptized if he/she believed in The Father. As he/she responded “I believe”, the presbyter, with his hand on the candidate’s head, immersed him/her once in the water. This procedure was repeated twice again as faith was professed in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Spirit. As the candidates emerged from the baptismal water, they were anointed with the oil of thanksgiving by the presbyters. In the case of women, presbyters anointed only the head; deaconesses anointed the rest of the body. When the newly baptized put on their clothes, they went from the baptistery to the assembly of

Christians in the Church. The bishop then laid his hand upon them and prayed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The bishop poured consecrated oil into his hands and placed his hand on the head of each candidate saying, "I anoint you with the holy oil in God the Father Almighty, in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit." He then sealed the candidate by making the sign of the cross on his/her forehead. The kiss of peace with, "the Lord be with you" and "also with you" followed. The prayer of the faithful was recited, followed by the Eucharist.

PATRISTIC AGE (SECOND TO SEVENTH CENTURY)

One great contribution of the age of the early Church theologians was the development of the catechumenate. Community responsibility and involvement were demanded as integral to the initiating process. Documents from this era speak of Christian initiation as being celebrated annually by the entire community at the Easter Vigil where the order followed was the water-bath, anointing, the hand-laying and full acceptance into the community with the reception of the Eucharist. The anointing and hand-laying which later became known as Confirmation, was seen as 'the affirmation of Baptism and as leading up to the reception of the Eucharist.

The Christian community of the fourth century developed a complex series of ritual actions for unfolding the fullness of the mystery of Christ in the lives of adults coming to believe in Jesus. First, believing Christians or sponsors presented the candidates for acceptance into the catechumenate. Then followed a long period, often of several years duration, in which the candidates were gradually introduced into a way of living that was shared by other Christians and marked by a sense of continual conversion. This conversion came through listening to the Word of God, frequent prayer, and regular periods of fasting and alms-giving.

Finally, some of the candidates were chosen - usually at the beginning of the Lenten season - to prepare for Christian initiation during the celebration of the Easter Vigil. During the season of Lent, the entire community prayed frequently for the candidates as they were instructed in a prayerful way in the mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The important expressions of the faith-community were experienced and nurtured. The Our Father and the Creed were presented to them in a special ceremony. In the celebration at the Easter Vigil, the candidates listened with the entire faith-community to the Word of God, prayed, and fasted throughout the night. As dawn broke, the candidates were led to the pool for Baptism and there were immersed in the water by the bishop as they professed their faith in the Trinity. The bishop was often assisted by deacons and in Syria by deaconesses. The newly-baptized were then signed by the bishop with the gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands and anointing. The neophytes completed their initiation by bringing forth the gifts of bread and wine for the Eucharistic celebration and by sharing the Eucharist with the Christian community for the first time. This intense conversion experience in the midst of the Christian community was usually followed by a period of catechesis (called The Mystagogia), lasting for the fifty days of Pentecost, in which the meaning of all the signs of Christian initiation were unfolded. Thus, in a broad outline, we have the celebration of the process of becoming a Christian, a process that celebrated the dying and rising with Christ, a sharing in Christ's paschal mystery, and a process that terminated with the-sending of the Spirit on Pentecost (cf. paragraph 19 of Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). Each year the lives of the entire faith-community were touched again by this cycle.

MIDDLE AGES TO MODERN TIMES

In the earliest centuries of the Church, Baptism was a radical commitment, but after the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.) it lost a great deal of its radical decisiveness, elitism, martyrdom, and ready-for-heaven complexion. Because of the Edict, it was no longer dangerous to be a Christian and the numbers who wanted to become Christian increased dramatically.

Later in the fifth century Augustine's idea that Baptism was necessary for the remission of original sin led to a tremendous increase in infant Baptism. Priests were doing the water-Baptisms but the post-baptismal anointings were reserved for the bishops. This led to long intervals between the sacraments in the Western Churches.

Confronted with three separate rites, medieval theologians predictably discerned three separate sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Once the anointing was separated in time and meaning from Baptism and the Eucharist, and designated as a sacrament whose effect was to strengthen the recipient, it became subject to a variety of theological interpretations. Some claimed the anointing was to strengthen recipients to give Christian witness to the world. Others maintained that it strengthened recipients to defend the Church as soldiers of Christ. The soldier of Christ view was somewhat influenced by the experience of the Crusades. Most such interpretations, however, lost sight of the original place and meaning of the laying on of the hands and the anointing in the process of initiation into the Church. Few of them related Confirmation to Baptism or the Eucharist or did justice to the traditional theme of the gift of the Spirit.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

One of the profound innovations of the twentieth century came through the pastoral concern of Pope Pius X. He did not feel that it was wise to postpone the reception of Eucharist to such a late age and introduced the practice of First Communion being moved to an earlier age, usually called the age of reason, around seven or eight years old. This pastoral concern of Pope Pius X has indeed had much fruit for introducing children at an earlier age into an understanding of the whole sacramental life. On the other hand, problems seemed to arise immediately with regard to the age of Confirmation. In some sections of Europe, Confirmation was also brought forward to about the age of seven. In other areas, Confirmation was even brought to as early an age as two or three, and this practice still remains in some sections of South America. The general practice, however, was to leave Confirmation after First Communion and generally around the age of twelve.

New dimensions of the Sacrament of Confirmation also began to be emphasized. In addition to the concept of the confirmed becoming a soldier of Christ with the task of defending the faith and witnessing to it, Confirmation also began to acquire an emphasis as directed toward involvement in Christian apostolate. There seemed to be a new understanding that Confirmation could correspond to a mature, Christian commitment made at a more adult age.

The Second Vatican Council decreed that all the Sacraments of Initiation be revitalized and given their proper place in the life of the Church. In addition, in the revision of the rites, the Church hoped to make the nature and purpose of the sacraments clear to the people of today, as well as encourage their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments. In the norms established by Pope Paul VI in 1971 when the *Rite of Confirmation* was revised, adult converts should receive Confirmation and Eucharist at the same time they receive Baptism. However, with regard to children, the decree states that “In the Latin Church the administration of Confirmation is generally postponed until about the seventh year. For pastoral reasons, however, especially to strengthen the faithful in complete obedience to Christ the Lord and in loyal testimony to Christ, Episcopal conferences may choose an age which seems more appropriate, so that the sacrament is given at a more mature age after appropriate formation.” (ROC, 1)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) agreed to leave the decision regarding the age of Confirmation to the local ordinary (diocesan bishop). This was validated in the United States after the implementation of the revised 1983 Code, Canon 891, and the norm took effect July 1, 2002.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published in 1994 made it clear that Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which:

- Gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine family
- Incorporates us more firmly into Christ
- Strengthens our bond with the Church
- Associates us more closely with her mission
- Helps us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds. (CCC 1316)

A complete treatment of the Sacrament of Confirmation is available in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* Paragraphs 1286-1321. The material in the “*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*” will also provide valuable information as you design your program and prepare students to receive the sacrament. See pages 201-211 of the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*.

CONTINUING THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

GIFT vs. COMMITMENT

In reviewing the development of the sacrament of Confirmation through the ages, it becomes obvious that two theological principles have been given emphasis at various times: first, the invitation to grace mediated through the sacraments in the community of the Church, and second, the role of faith as a conscious personal response and commitment on the part of the individual in that same faith community. These two positions show a shift from faith as a personal response to the divine initiative to an emphasis on grace or 'gift' which led to the practice of infant baptism and the administration of the sacraments as soon as possible. This emphasis is not based upon age, maturity or spiritual readiness, but upon the gratuity of the sacramental gift. In the second view, the concern is with the candidate's response and spiritual readiness to express a conscious commitment to a real life in Christ. The emphasis is upon the quality of Christian formation which leads one to accept God's gracious gift and to give it forth in mission to the world. It is this viewpoint which underlies the guidelines on Confirmation for our diocese. The two viewpoints are in tension with each other, as both elements are integral and must be recognized, protected and fostered in any practice.

CONVERSION

Conversion is described as a "change in one's feeling or point of view from a state marked by indifference or opposition to one of zealous acceptance." There is a striking implication of action. When a Christian is baptized, whether as an infant or as an adult, the Scriptures refer to this action as "becoming a new creation," or "putting on Christ." In addition, this "conversion" or "coming to faith" is transmitted, sustained and expanded through interaction with other people of faith in a converted community. Extended over a lifetime, this process of conversion is continually fostered, nourished and led to deeper commitment in the celebration of the Eucharist.

THE AGE QUESTION

In any study or catechesis on the sacraments it must be remembered that Confirmation is part of the Rite of Christian Initiation. Several factors are emerging in Church life in the United States during this time that call for an emphasis being placed on the quality of response in faith on the part of the candidate. First, changes in family life makes communicating and nurturing the gift of the sacramental life challenging. Second, there is a revitalization of the central role of the celebration of the sacraments in the faith community. And third, the Second Vatican Council has mandated a revision of sacramental rites and has clearly stated liturgical principles for these rites.

Parents and children need the support of other committed Christians and a strong faith community to withstand the pressures of society which run counter to Christian values. Today

the Church is emphasizing the communal dimension of the sacraments. In the past, the stress was placed on the individual's union with Christ through the sacraments. Now, both scriptural and liturgical studies have reaffirmed the central role of the community. The sacraments are not only for personal salvation and growth but are actions of the Church expressing and celebrating God's presence and action in the midst of God's people. They are actions in and for the sake of the community. Therefore, if the celebration of the sacraments is to be an authentic response to the Divine Initiative, they require faith and commitment on the part of those celebrating. With regard to Confirmation this commitment is required not only of the candidate, but also of the entire parish community.

Finally, Vatican II urged that in the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, the full and active participation by all people is the aim to be considered before all else, for the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. In today's world, the situation exists of numerous Catholics who are sacramentalized but not evangelized. In introducing a program of Confirmation celebrated in the Junior and Senior years of high school, the opportunity is presented to young people for a personal acceptance of the faith that was once accepted for them. And, empowered by the Spirit, the candidate is able to respond to the call of the Church and take on the responsibility of being a maturing disciple of Christ in the world. (Cf. CCC 1307-1308)

PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES

“It is the responsibility of the people of God
to prepare the baptized for Confirmation.”
(Rite of Confirmation, 3)

The parish community must be called to a conscious awareness that it represents the Church for the young persons, and that initiation of new members is the concern and task of all the baptized. The parish community is therefore called to frequent evaluation of the level of true faith community alive within its membership, evidenced by the love and concern that characterized the early Christian communities.

As a sponsoring community, the whole parish needs to fulfill five basic roles:

1. **EDUCATION** of the whole community so that community becomes aware that new (and often young) people are willing to enter into the community in a new and involved way.
2. **HOSPITALITY** in welcoming members and new arrivals by creating a sense of being “at home” in the worship and fellowship of the parish.
3. **PRAYER** by being seen as persons who invite God into their daily lives through public and/or private prayer.
4. **WITNESS** by serving God and others through an obvious lived faith.
5. **SUPPORT**, both financial and emotional, so that Confirmation candidates are able to participate in retreats and celebrations in a fulfilled manner.

Confirmation Team

To effectively implement a Confirmation preparation program that accomplishes the objectives outlined above, parishes are encouraged to organize a Confirmation Team. Possible members of this team are parish priest, director/coordinator of Religious Education, director/coordinator of Youth ministry, school principal (where applicable), catechists, parents and other interested persons.

The Confirmation Team is responsible for prayer, studying, planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating the Confirmation preparation program.

Specific responsibilities of the Confirmation Team include the following:

1. **EDUCATE** the parish as a whole by:
 - a) announcements and/or interviews of candidates to appear visibly in church, from the pulpit, and in the bulletin.
 - b) designing Sunday liturgical celebrations to heighten awareness

- c) formal introductions of candidates at Sunday liturgy.
2. Promote parish **HOSPITALITY** for candidates by:
 - a) publicly welcoming them at Sunday liturgy
 - b) encouraging candidate participation in liturgical celebrations that say “Welcome” and/or “We pass the faith to you.”
 3. Encourage private and public **PRAYER** for candidates by:
 - a) forming “prayer partners” for each candidate
 - b) including prayers for candidates in General Intercession Petitions in Sunday liturgy
 4. **WITNESS** to candidates by:
 - a) visitation to “Confirmation class” as witness to power of Sacrament
 - b) inviting candidates to participate with members of the community in ministry
 - c) inviting candidates to witness to younger members of parish community (i.e. First Communion or Reconciliation candidates)
 5. **SUPPORT** for candidates and programs can be achieved through:
 - a) providing financial support for Confirmation program
 - b) creating a program of encouragement – “Adopt-a-Candidate” for parish members or families
 - c) providing receptions at enrollment and/or on Confirmation day
 - d) inviting newly confirmed parish members to be part of parish work; i.e. music, administrative councils, lay ministry, community support
 - e) providing projects and programs for candidates and newly confirmed so they feel a part of parish community
 - f) providing mentors for candidates as they become more involved in parish life.

YOUTH MINISTRY AND CONFIRMATION

. . . Youth ministry “is the Church’s mission of reaching into the daily lives of modern young people and showing them the presence of God...It is a return to the way Jesus taught, putting ministry before teaching and people over institutions. In this ministry, religious content is a way of life for the person ministering and the young person touched, through a sequential development of faith, dependent on the readiness and need of the adolescent.” (*Vision of Youth Ministry*, USCC, 1976)

Preparation for Confirmation takes place within the context of a parish’s total youth ministry effort. Both the sacrament of Confirmation and youth ministry share the common vision of integrating young people more fully into the life of the faith community. Within the context of parish youth ministry, the Confirmation program builds on a parish’s effort to reach and involve youth. After Confirmation the young person should continue to be involved in the parish’s youth ministry as well as be invited to participate in other aspects of parish life. At this point, continuing integration is of primary importance. Through such a framework, we are following the directive of the *National Catechetical Directory*, “Youth catechesis is most effective within a total youth ministry.”

The Church in its ministry to youth is committed to the fullest personal development of young people. This ministry is multidimensional, encompassing relationships to self, others, and God, particularly within a context of a supportive community. This ministry is TO YOUTH, when the Christian community exercises its pastoral role in attending to young people’s needs: WITH YOUTH because young people share with adults a common responsibility to carry out the Church’s mission: BY YOUTH when young people exercise their own ministry to others, particularly to their peers: FOR YOUTH in that adult youth ministers attempt to interpret the needs of youth and act as advocates in articulating youth’s legitimate concerns to the wider community.

Comprehensive youth ministry has three goals: to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today, to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person (*Renewing the Vision*, USCC, 1997). A comprehensive approach to youth ministry is not a single program or recipe for ministry. Rather, it provides a way for integrating ministry with adolescents and their families into the total life and mission of the Church, recognizing that the whole community is responsible for this ministry. The comprehensive approach to youth ministry uses all of the resources of our faith community—people, ministry, programs—in a common effort to promote the three goals of the Church’s ministry with adolescents. The comprehensive framework for ministry with adolescents is designed to:

- Utilize each of the church's ministries—advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship—in an integrated approach to achieving the three goals for ministry with adolescents;
- Provide developmentally appropriate programs and activities that promote personal and spiritual growth for young and older adolescents;
- Enrich family life and promote the faith growth of families of adolescents;
- Incorporate young people fully into all aspects of church life and engage them in ministry and leadership in the faith community
- Create partnerships among families, schools, churches, and community organizations in a common effort to promote positive youth development (RTV, USCC, 1997).

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND FAITH PROFILES OF THE ADOLESCENT

It is important in ministry to youth to reflect upon the development of the young people who will be a part of our programs. Appendix A lists some of the psychological and faith characteristics we can expect to encounter in adolescents. It is especially important in our Confirmation preparation that we be sensitive to these characteristics and needs so that unrealistic expectations are not applied in the design of our programs. (Appendix A, is from the Center for Ministry Development, *Youth Works*, 1993).

NORMS -- SACRAMENTAL CONTEXT

The Sacraments of Initiation into Christ and the Church are Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (All three sacraments are required for FULL COMMUNION in the church, Canon 842.2). Confirmation for high school juniors and seniors in the Diocese of Grand Island is the normal final step of Initiation into the Church. An essential sacrament of initiation, Confirmation includes all the elements of Christian Initiation, just as do Baptism and the Eucharist.

Initiation includes: the appropriate ritual, becoming more fully part of the community, readiness for the sacrament, appropriate catechesis, and involvement with the community. Confirmation, the sacrament of being sealed with the Spirit, brings a fuller unity with Christ through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Ritual, union with the church community, catechesis and interaction with the parish community need to be appropriate to the age level of the candidate for Confirmation. (See appendix A)

The Ritual needs to reflect that the GIFT of Christ's life and unity with the faithful, begun in Baptism, is fully given in the anointing of Confirmation. The desire for reconciliation and unity in Christ's dying and rising through participation in the Eucharist should be acknowledged and deepened in this sacrament. Full belonging in the community should be described to the candidates and they should be warmly welcomed into and appreciated for the fullest communion with all believers." The ritual, desire for reconciliation, and belonging to the

community fits the actual condition of the student's psychological and faith readiness at the time of catechesis for Confirmation, so that preparation for Confirmation avoids imposing either an embarrassing childishness on the candidate or overwhelmingly adult burdens on high school students.

1. For students, belonging to the community best begins with the acute adolescent needs of coping with an emerging identity, an identity which may have very high needs for reception, discovery, testing, acceptance, belonging and new peers.

2. Eucharist/reconciliation celebrations need to emphasize the continuing and varied manner of Jesus' love for us, especially in dying for us, and that participation in the Eucharist unites us with the full power of Christ's saving, healing, forgiving grace. Other moments of reconciliation, past and yet to come, are promised in their fullness to those who profess their joining in Christ's dying and rising in the Eucharist.

3. Catechesis for Initiation firmly grounds the candidate's Christian faith and life in the fullness for all life offered us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for every human being.

4. Therefore, rituals and the anointing for Confirmation are to be designed to express the specific capacity and conditions of belonging, reconciliation, identity, acceptance, and challenges of the candidate at that time in his or her life. Rituals not only make MORE FULLY REAL one's life at that time, but provide a public and symbolic foundation for all initiation elements, which might follow later, namely: identity, conversion, community and belief.

5. Moral norms and their catechesis follow upon the above since any response in goodness requires that a person first experience himself or herself as good.

OUR TASK AS YOUTH MINISTERS TO CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR CONFIRMATION

To enable the whole parish to become a welcoming community, inviting and enabling the youth to feel at home and to be part of the parish community.

To create a warm, loving atmosphere in which God can touch the lives of youth.

To create an atmosphere of prayer where our youth can have a personal and communal experience with God.

To create an atmosphere in which the faith we share is not fundamentally a list of truths to be believed but a way of life to be lived in relationship with Jesus.

To be student-centered as well as content-centered.

To be attentive to the questions youth might ask, their psychology of learning, their intellectual and emotional maturity.

To create a program so oriented to help the youth grow up in all things in Jesus Christ and so become more fully members of a worshipping and serving Christian community.

To involve mature young adults who are already confirmed and active in the parish and who manifest a true witness to Christ and the Church as part of the Confirmation preparation.

To have a retreat for the candidates for Confirmation which provides an experience of Christian commitment and Christian community living.

To involve parents, sponsors & mentors in the Confirmation preparation process in such a way that those to be confirmed, sponsors, parents and mentors, all have their faith affirmed and strengthened.

To work with the pastor and Confirmation team to interview each candidate and to pray with each candidate.

To request each candidate for Confirmation to personally write a letter to the Bishop requesting the sacrament and to express his or her personal commitment to Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church, and to the building of the Reign of God.

CATECHESIS

CONFIRMATION CATECHESIS

Sacramental catechesis cannot be equated with instruction in the faith. Rather, it should be seen as a process of faith formation and a process that involves not only the individuals preparation to celebrate the sacrament but also the entire faith community.

Sacramental catechesis prepares the individual and the community for a meaningful celebration of a particular sacramental ritual, and more importantly, it prepares them to live more deeply the faith reality being celebrated. Thus the catechesis for Confirmation focuses on the deepened commitment to Christ and to the Church that this sacrament celebrates.

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit – his actions, his gifts, and his biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands. (CCC 1309)

Definition of a catechist

A catechist is a faith-filled, mature, active member of the church willing to accept the responsibility for affirming the faith of the candidates through witness, word and example. (cf. NDC 228-230)

Responsibilities of the catechist

1. One who is a mature, active member of the local church who participates fully in the Communal worship of the Church
2. One who is chosen, adequately prepared, and commissioned by the parish
3. One who is willing to develop a relationship with the candidates, their families, mentors and sponsors
4. One who will work closely with the parish educational team
5. One who has an awareness of how the programs relate to the
 1. Total catechetical program
 2. Parish community–worship/youth ministry/service
6. One who is willing to affirm the readiness of candidates for reception of Confirmation
7. One who will witness to and share his/her own faith experience (cf. NDC 228-230)

PROCESS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

The *National Directory for Catechesis* identified fundamental principles to catechesis for each of the sacraments. Parishes should present sacramental catechesis that

- Is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of faith with living the faith
- Is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- Presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit
- Is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized
- Is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith
- Involves parents in the preparation their children for the sacraments
- Is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program
- Focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament
- Enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebrations (NDC pg 114)

Regarding catechesis specifically for the Sacrament of Confirmation the Directory says it

- Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting and indelible character on the soul
- Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deed
- Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts, and his fruits
- Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experience
- Includes instruction on the *Rite of Confirmation* and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula
- Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the children for Confirmation
- Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation (in the Eastern Catholic Churches, however, the priest is the ordinary minister of Chrismation) (NDC 123)

Specifically, parish Confirmation catechesis should address the issues listed below. As you review the following curriculum issues, remember Confirmation catechesis assumes the

following issues are addressed in their fullness that is completely and systematically, as part of a comprehensive youth ministry program.

FAITH

Personal growth—interpreting human experience in light of the Gospel

Self identity—gifts of the Holy Spirit/one's own talents

Discovering how others have experienced God's call

SCRIPTURE

Bible—Old Testament/New Testament

Role of Scripture in everyday life

Jesus

SACRAMENTS

Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

Vocation—Matrimony, Holy Orders

Healing/Forgiveness—Reconciliation (sin/forgiveness),

Anointing of the Sick

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

What does it mean to be church? What does it mean to be the Body of Christ?

Paschal Mystery-Worship as a community of believers

Ministry

Christology

- Person of Christ—His ministry/How do we connect?
- Prayer/worship—the community of believers

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Morality

Living out the Baptismal Call

Importance of Church

Life issues

Seven Components of Catholic Social Teaching

Sources for:

- *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*. Published by USCCB, pages 13ff.
- *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching Challenges and Directions* Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Published by USCCB, pages 4-6.
- *Leader's Guide to Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, Published by USCCB, pages 31 – 34

Personal spirituality

MISSION

Witness
Service\ministry
Evangelization
Sharing

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND SCOPE

The structure of Parish Confirmation preparation programs are developed from a variety of models. Each model has several components. Those components include, the length of the program, frequency of class sessions and amount of time for each class. For example:

A parish may decide to structure the length of their program for:

- One semester
- One year
- Two year

The frequency of classes for:

- Every week
- Every other week
- Twice a month
- 3 times a month

The length of each class

- 2 hours
- 1 1/2 hours

Whichever combination of components a parish chooses, programs need to provide for between 20 and 25 hours of contact with the participants.

Parishes can also conduct their sacramental preparation programs, including Confirmation, separately from their other catechetical programs, such as school or Parish Religious Education. This option further emphasizes the community nature and specialness of sacramental preparation.

All the issues outlined in the Process of Christian Living (see above) need to be addressed in a way and depth appropriate to each model. An example is given below for each model.

One Semester

- Personal growth/self identity
- Role of scripture in everyday life
- Sacrament overview—emphasis on Confirmation
- What does it mean to be Church?
- Mass/liturgy
- Person of Christ—His ministry/How do we connect?

- Prayer/worship
- Expectation of lifestyle/reflection/personal spirituality
- Role of Church
- Role of Holy Spirit
- Witness/evangelization
- Catholic Social Teaching – Justice and Service

One Year

All the topics given in the “Process of Christian Lifestyle” (see above)

Two Year

- First Year
 - Faith
 - Scripture
 - Sacraments
 - Church and Community
- Second Year
 - Christian living
 - Mission

CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

Films and Videos

Refer to the REMEX catalogue at www.gidiocese.org for the most current list of media.
Also see Appendix B for a brief list of possible media on Confirmation.

Confirmation Texts

Current Confirmation Text Publishers

PUBLISHER	TEXT
Ave Maria Press	Confirming Faith
Ave Maria Press	Send Out Your Spirit
Harcourt Religion Publishers	Celebrating Our Faith
Harcourt Religion Publishers	Called To Celebrate Confirmation
Good Ground Press	Moving In The Spirit
Loyola Press	Christ Our Life-Confirmed In Spirit
Paulist Press	I Have Chosen You
Pflaum	Confirmation: Receiving The Gift Of The Spirit
St Mary’s Press	Confirmed In A Faithful Community
Silver, Burdett & Ginn, Religion	Connect—Gifted with the Spirit High School Program

SERVICE AND MINISTRY FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

In the western tradition, the sacrament of Confirmation includes a commitment to be a follower of Jesus. This calling leads a person directly into service to all people and most especially to the poor and outcast who are so near to the Lord. The letter of James says it powerfully:

“My brothers and sisters, what good is it for someone to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save one has it? ‘If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and you say to them, ‘Goodbye and good luck! Keep warm and well fed,’ but do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with the faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless. To such a person one might say, ‘You have faith and I have works, is that it?’ Show me your faith without works and I will show you the faith that underlies my works.” (James 2:14-18)

Consequently, a disciple of Christ is someone who has been instructed in the Gospel and tries to witness that teaching in his/her daily life in service to others.

Service to Christ, the church, the community and the world is primary to Catholic life. Involvement in and commitment to ministry and service can help candidates discern and develop their own gifts.

A vital part of Confirmation preparation is a commitment to service and ministry which will serve as a further introduction to Catholic life (Cf. GDC 17 & 19). This will help the candidates to:

1. Recognize and develop their own personal and unique gifts, talents and charisms.
2. Develop a deeper experience of, and appreciation for, Catholic beliefs, tradition and discipleship uniting them more firmly to Christ.
3. Realize their responsibility to worship with the parish community rendering bond with the Church more perfect.
4. Develop their prayer life.
5. Develop spiritual and scriptural awareness.
6. Guided by the churches social teaching, to understand their responsibility for stewardship in their parish and the global community.
7. Witness through service, ministry and good example.

The candidate’s service or ministry should be part of an important, on-going parish life. It is best presented as a life-long privilege and responsibility, rather than as a one-time or short-term requirement, that when completed, is ended.

It is important to affirm candidates for the service and ministry they are involved in prior to presenting themselves for Confirmation preparation. New opportunities for service and ministry can then be suggested based on the candidates gifts and charisms.

Candidates are encouraged to be involved in ministry or service for the same amount of time that an adult would ordinarily give to the same ministry or service. Preferably, the candidate's involvement and participation should be at least every other week. Ideally, some of this service or ministry would take place with the candidates parents, sponsor or mentor.

DISCERNMENT OF GIFTS

For candidates to choose, be actively involved in, and committed to service and ministry, they must first be able to recognize their own unique gifts, talents and charisms. Many will have a real interest in helping others, but no idea how to match their gifts and talents with available service and ministry.

Those responsible for Confirmation preparation can use a variety of resources to guide candidates in discernment of their gifts. These resources include parish retreat teams, diocesan retreat teams, TEC teams, Youth Ministry teams, the parish pastor, and others with experience in prayerful reflection and knowledge of parish, local or global ministry and service needs.

TOTAL MINISTRY AND SERVICE

Involvement in total ministry and service helps the candidates understand that service to others is central to the Gospel message; helps them gain understanding and acceptance of themselves; and helps them realize their responsibility to use their God-given talents and gifts to help **all** people.

Ministry and service opportunities available to the candidates include those already in existence or those that are needed, but not yet established in the parish and broader community.

By focusing on parish ministry and service, candidates will develop a sense of commitment to and involvement in the life of the parish community; become more aware of the needs of the parish community; and pave the way toward continued involvement in and responsibility for the needs of the parish.

Involvement in service and ministry to the wider community helps the candidates understand the broader social and moral issues of the community and the world.

Ideally, their selection of ministry and service should include both those to the parish **AND** the wider community.

SELECTION OF SERVICE AND MINISTRY

A list of available and possible ministries and areas of service should be given to the candidates. Representatives of parish ministries and service groups and community service groups could present and explain ministry and service needs and witness to their own response to the Lord's call to ministry and service.

The ministry and service opportunities are most effective when they:

1. are based on a genuine need of the parish and community that young people can recognize as important and worth their effort.
2. challenge the candidates to make decisions and recognize their responsibility for their decisions.

REFLECT AND EVALUATE

With each candidate make adequate time available to prepare for, reflect on and evaluate their service and ministry experience, including both the candidate's reflections and evaluations, as well as the reflection and evaluation of the Confirmation Team or those responsible for their preparation.

Adults serve both as guides and informal counselors. While they do not assume responsibility for the efforts of the candidates, they assist, monitor and evaluate these efforts.

RECOGNITION

It is important to recognize candidates for their contribution of time and talent to the parish or community. Recognition might be shown through bulletin announcements, parish newsletter, special recognition meetings, or at Mass, etc.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Liturgical celebrations can greatly enhance the sense of commitment and discipleship of the candidates and might include a Rite of Commitment or Commissioning or a Prayer Service for Discernment.

EXAMPLES OF SERVICE AND MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

On-going ministries and service which are already an integral part of parish life, or which are needed in the parish might include:

1. Visitations to hospitals, nursing homes, shut-ins, elderly, mentally ill, developmentally challenged, etc.
2. Assistance to the elderly or shut-ins with shoveling snow, mowing lawns, housekeeping, running errands, performing odd jobs, etc.
3. Participate maturely in the stewardship work of or for the Church (parish) including bazaars, tithing, etc.
4. Parish youth representatives to various committees, Parish Council, School Board, Liturgy Committee, etc.
5. Youth representative for parish newsletter and diocesan newspaper.
6. Child care services for various parish activities such as retreats, adult education, during Mass, etc.
7. Assistance with parish efforts to care for the needy, i.e., soup kitchens, etc.
8. Religious Education Assistants.
9. Establish and/or staff parish library; information bureaus on drugs, help organizations, etc.
10. Involvement in liturgical ministries such as music, lectoring, greeting, ushering, etc.
11. Office or clerical assistance.
12. Youth bible sharing or discussion groups.
13. Ecumenical involvements with other area churches.
14. Youth participant in retreat teams.
15. Help plan monthly Masses and liturgies.
16. Bring food and support for bereaved and sick.
17. Design or upkeep of a parish web site.

On-going ministries and service to the wider community might be:

1. Toy collection, repair and distribution for children in need.
2. Mentoring programs.
3. Care for and involvement with children in treatment facilities or other institutions.
4. Tutoring.
5. Community beautification projects.
6. Persons in the community who will appreciate a relationship with the candidate, for example the elderly, handicapped, elementary school children, etc.

THE CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

(CF Cannon 874, 892, 893)

A sponsor is a mature Catholic man or woman who knows the candidate well, is not the candidate's parent, has been confirmed himself/herself, and witnesses to the candidate's morals, faith and intention.

The sponsor is one who is free to undertake the responsibilities of supporting the candidate in his/her faith life and is chosen by the candidate after consultation with the parish staff. This person may or may not be the baptismal godparent. It is not required that the sponsor be the same sex as the candidate.

It is preferable that the sponsor be a person of the immediate church community making it possible for him/her to attend designated preparation classes and to share closely in the sacramental preparation of the candidate. It is the sponsor's responsibility to witness to the candidate the reality of the Gospel in his/her own life and in society.

THE ROLE

The sponsor points out the candidate's gifts, encouraging him/her to use them for the upbuilding of the Church. It is the ideal time to help the candidate to become aware of the opportunities and responsibilities he/she has, to make the world a better place by prayer, study and community lifestyle. The sponsor walks with the candidate as a mentor helping him/her in times of doubt and anxiety and to watch over the progress of his/her baptismal life.

A sponsor can act as a liaison between the church community and the candidate by bringing about community awareness of the gifts that a candidate brings with his/her youth and commitment to the future church.

At the Confirmation ceremony the sponsor, on behalf of the parish community, gives public testimony for the candidate by presenting the candidate to the bishop.

After Confirmation the sponsor continues interest in the candidate by affirming the faith of the candidate through witness and example. The sponsor strongly encourages the candidate to continue service to the community and to be a part of total ministry in the parish. Together the sponsor and candidate attend study groups, liturgies, retreats or any function that leads to personal growth.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

In recent years the Church is realizing the importance of community experience as part of total preparation for sacramental receptions.

In the home is where the candidate experiences for the first time a sense of living with a community of believers who nurture, nourish and celebrate his/her faith life. Parents whose lives present a pattern of faith sparked by the fruits of the Holy Spirit hand over to the confirmand the most valuable of all lessons for sacramental preparation. A child surrounded in a home permeated with a spirit of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22) has already been exposed to the effects of the sacrament of Confirmation and has seen the difference that it makes in the lives of parents. Living in an atmosphere where the life of the Spirit is manifest provides the best resource for sacramental preparation and supplies an incentive for its reception.

It is important that parents participate in the Confirmation program by: (Cf. NDC 234-235)

1. attending all workshops and meetings designed for parents.
2. being present at liturgical celebrations of the candidate.
3. supporting the candidate in his/her service projects.
4. providing open communication with encouragement that will lead to an honest decision with out coercion about the reception of the sacrament.
5. making important days in the life of the candidate special celebrations in the home; e.g., baptismal day, birthday, liturgical feasts, etc.
6. making special mention during family prayer time of the graces desired for a fruitful reception of the sacrament by the candidate.
7. becoming involved in the planning of and helping with the Confirmation program.
8. encouraging the newly confirmed to continue his/her involvement in the parish.

If the parents have participated in the Confirmation program previously, the program coordinator may provide other sessions(to avoid undue repetition) that are separate from the regular preparation program using lectures, discussion periods, videos, films and other resources that lead to a deepening of life lived in the Spirit.

These parents could work with the program coordinator in planning the Confirmation program and liturgies. It could be recommended that the parents who have attended the Confirmation instructions earlier be recommended as sponsors for candidates who are not their own children.

SOME OVERVIEW NOTES

1. Age: candidates for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation are to be high school juniors or seniors. (page 10)
2. Qualifications for sponsors for Confirmation are the same as for Baptism. (page 22)
3. The major components of the Confirmation preparation program that need planning include:
 - Confirmation Team – page 7, 26
 - Confirmation Catechesis – pages 13-17
 - Confirmation Retreat – pages 12, 30-31
 - Service Projects – pages 18-21
 - Parish Involvement – pages 7-8
 - Parental Involvement/meetings – pages 23, 32-33
 - Liturgical Celebrations & Rites – page 29
 - Choice of Catechetical Resource Materials – page 13-17
 - Program Evaluation
4. It is the Bishop's practice to meet with Confirmation candidates prior to the celebration of the sacrament. He meets with the candidate at least 30 minutes prior to the celebration
5. A variety of pastoral issues or tasks need to be addressed including:
 - verifying candidate's prior reception of Baptism and Eucharist by obtaining Baptism certificate.
 - sending notification of reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation to place of Baptism.
6. The Bishop ordinarily establishes a Confirmation schedule in January for the Spring of that year. When establishing the schedule the Bishop refers to the schedules from previous years and determines a circuit enabling him to celebrate a number of Confirmations on a given trip.

IMPLEMENTING THE PARISH CONFIRMATION PROGRAM WHOSE ROLE IS IT?

SOME POSSIBILITIES

The following is a checklist and guide for roles in regard to implementing Confirmation. **Parishes may choose to adapt according to their own needs.**

THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR (Cf 220-221 NDC)

- Convenes parish staff (and/or advisors) for discussion of Confirmation and decisions regarding process.
- Consults appropriate organizations.
- Appoints coordinator/committee for the parish Confirmation program.
- Celebrates liturgy of enrollment.
- Prepares the parish community as a whole.
- Coordinates the preparation of the Confirmation liturgy.
- May or may not be involved in all of the following to the extent of his time and talent. A minimum involvement is essential in each area, however, he may delegate involvement to others.
- Instruction of Confirmation team/committee/catechists/others
- Pastor with team will:
 - Issue invitation to potential candidates
 - Provide Parent/sponsor program
 - Work with confirmation team to interview candidates
 - Participate in catechesis/retreat/service projects/ reconciliation
 - Evaluate the program

THE ROLE OF THE DRE/COORDINATOR - If applicable

- Participates as a member of the parish staff in decisions regarding the Confirmation preparation process.
- May serve as
 - Coordinator of the Confirmation program –Member of the Confirmation team
 - Resource to the team
 - Be involved in any aspect of the program according to time/talent/decisions made
 - Insure the parish program complies with Diocesan policies on Safe Environment and Catechist Certification

THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH MINISTER

If the parish has a youth minister, this person will preferably, be delegated to coordinate the program and the Confirmation team. That role is described in section below titled “Confirmation Coordinator.” If the youth minister is not the program coordinator, he or she may serve as:

- Advocate for the program to the youth
- Advocate for youth to the program and the parish staff regarding the Confirmation program
- Counselor to youth in regard to their decision about Confirmation
- Member of the Confirmation team
- Resource to the Confirmation team
- Be involved in all other areas of the program according to time/talent/decisions made
- To insure the parish program complies with Diocesan policies on Safe Environment and Catechist Certification

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - If applicable

- Gives input toward, and participates in, decisions according to the established process of that parish
- Supports the program wherever possible with students, parents and faculty
- Participates in the Confirmation program to the extent of time/talent

CONFIRMATION COORDINATOR

- Coordinates Confirmation team
- Recruits and prepares persons to be on the Confirmation team
- Proposes total schedule of events to team and staff
- Works directly with staff in coordination of all aspects of the program
- Is accountable for overall implementation of the Confirmation program
- Is responsible for evaluation of the program
- In the absence of a team, insures that all items listed below are implemented

CONFIRMATION TEAM

- Is formed/does homework/studies/works at becoming a team of persons committed to one another and the candidates
- Is announced/introduced to the parish
- Begins recruitment/invitation phase
- Finalizes list of candidates for this Confirmation program
- Implements program for parents/sponsors
- Implements:
 - Catechesis
 - Service projects
 - Retreat
 - Liturgical celebrations
 - Rite of enrollment
 - Celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation
 - Confirmation celebration
 - Other appropriate prayer and liturgical celebrations
 - Interviews
- Implements follow up
- Evaluates
- Dissolves in favor of the next Confirmation team

This checklist is a guide to implementing Confirmation. Parishes may choose to adapt according to their own needs.

Appendix A

The Changes of Older Adolescence

Intellectual Development

- developing the ability to engage in reflective thinking ("what do I think?" "why do I think that?"), making it possible to develop a personal identity, personal value system, and personal faith
- thinking about and planning for the future

Identity Development

- beginning the process of establishing a personal identity, which includes an acceptance of one's sexuality, decision-making regarding the future, and a commitment to a personally-held system of values and religious beliefs
- shifting from the authority of family to self-chosen authority (oneself), often by establishing an identity that is shaped by significant others (peers and adults)
- experiencing a period of questioning, reevaluation, and experimentation
- developing increasing autonomy in making personal decisions, assuming responsibility for oneself, and regulating one's own behavior

Moral Development

- exercising moral judgments in matters of much greater complexity as they seek to establish a more personal form of moral reasoning
- reevaluating the moral values received from family, church, and significant others
- searching for a moral code which preserves their personal integrity and provides the basis for developing an internalized moral value system that can guide their behavior

Interpersonal Development

- moving toward greater personal intimacy and adult sexuality
- developing the capability for more mutual, trusting, deep, and enduring personal friendships with members of the same sex and opposite sex that provide acceptance, love, affirmation, and the opportunity to honestly share their deepest selves
- expanding their social perspective to encompass the larger world

Faith Development

- exploring and questioning the faith handed down by family and church as they search for a style of faith and belief which is more personal to oneself
- beginning the process of taking responsibility for one's own faith life, commitments, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes
- exploring a personal relationship with God who knows, accepts and confirms them, and with Jesus Christ through his teaching, example, and presence in one's life

Appendix B

Media Resources

Below is a list of titles to get you started. For more resources available for your Confirmation Process, please view the on-line catalog.

WHEN YOU ARE A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

SA 44 BK 34 pgs A ST. ANTHONY MESSEGER PRESS 2001

This book reflects on the responsibility and significance of being chosen as a Confirmation Sponsor to share your faith and personal experience with someone less familiar with the path than you. The author examines briefly the Sacrament of Confirmation and its rituals celebration, identifies the ways a person comes to the sacrament, summarizes the hallmarks of child and adolescent development, and offers suggestion for regular, consistent relationships and connections with young people.

CONFIRMATION: A Parish Celebration

SA 52 BK 125 pgs A LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS 1990

This books is used to prepare a worth liturgy to culminate the Confirmation process. It uses sound liturgical principles and good pastoral sense. It also includes insights and wisdom about confirmation as a sacrament of initiation gained from the many changes our Church has gone through in implementing the catechumenate. Pastors, liturgy directors, directors of religious education, and catechists who work with those preparing for confirmation and liturgical musicians will find this book invaluable in planning the infrequent but vitally important confirmation liturgy.

WHEN A TEENAGER CHOOSES YOU – as Friend, Confidante, Confirmation Sponsor

SA 53 BK 81 pgs A ST. ANTHONY MESSEGER PRESS 2000

This updated edition contains practical information for those undertaking the responsibility of spiritual guidance for a teenager. Providing an understanding of what makes a teenager “tick,” this book will give you the skills and confidence to talk persuasively about such delicate issues as prayer, morality, sin and guilt. Whether you are preparing for a role as Confirmation sponsor or simply seeking to inspire and understand the teens in your life, this books is an indispensable resource.

CONFIRMATION: The Baby in Solomon's Court

SA 54 BK 188 pgs S, A PAULIST PRESS 1993

This book is an accessible introduction to Confirmation and its mutations in all the major churches, east and west.

CONFIRMED IN THE SPIRIT: Prayer Services for Confirmation Classes and Retreats

SA 56 BK 77 pgs A TWENTY-THIRD PUBLICATIONS 1995

These comprehensive prayer services build toward a theology of the sacrament of confirmation even as students are participating in them. Most include ritual actions and Scripture readings as well as group prayers and reflections.

RETREAT IDEAS: for Ministry with Young Teens

YM 299 BK 140 pgs J, S, A ST. MARY'S PRESS 2001

This book contains retreats for young teens. Some of the retreat topics included are: Self-Esteem, Being True to Oneself, Confirmation, Discipleship, Triduum Themes, and Leadership Day for Young Teens.

CALL TO CELEBRATE CONFIRMATION: Stories of Celebration

DVD 59 DVD J, S, A HARCOURT RELIGION 2007

This DVD consists of five segments, which can be used to facilitate a parent and/or sponsor/mentor orientation or it can be used as part of the implementation of the program with candidates. The five segments include: "Welcome & Introduction," "History & Theology," "Vignettes," "Words of Wisdom," and Confirmation is..."

CONFIRMATION – CELEBRATING FAITH

V 1204 VT 14 min. S, A XXIII Publications 1998

The decision to be confirmed, for a youth, is often something they feel they have to do, perhaps to please Mom and Dad. This presentation explains that confirmation is a choice a young person makes to confirm the commitment their parents and youth as they continue preparing their hearts for the sacrament of Confirmation.

SEALED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT – SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

V 1344 VT 48 min. S-A ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER PRESS 2001

The history, rituals, and meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation are explored throughout this video. The Sacrament of Confirmation's purpose has often been ambiguous throughout the Church's history. This video will provide some insight for those studying and/or preparing for the sacrament. Catholic Update

SEALED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT – TEEN DISCIPLESHIP

V 1346 VT 28 min. J-A ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER PRESS 2001

Christian service is something we can do at any age. Teens in particular have a special place in taking up the call Jesus gives us all. This video explores how teens have and can serve others as they add good to the world. Catholic Update

FORMING CONFIRMATION SPONORS

V 1465 VT 30 min. S-A ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER PRESS 2002

This video offers insights and encouragement to those who accompany young people on the journey of initiation. Practical information about the role of a confirmation sponsor is offered, along with a special prayer segment. Catholic Update

CONFIRMATION: RITE FOR LIFE

V 1550 VT 23 min. S-A VIDEOS WITH VALUES 2004

This program presents a comprehensive explanation of the history and meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation through interviews with experts, reflections by young people who've been confirmed and by video of actual Confirmation ceremonies.

APPENDIX C

(MODEL)

RITE OF ENROLLMENT FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES

BEFORE LITURGY: (The parish community is welcomed and the significance of the special Rite of Enrollment is explained.)

AFTER HOMILY: (The pastor calls the name of each candidate. As each name is called the candidate comes forward to stand around the altar facing the congregation (or simply stand at his/her place.) When all names have been called the celebrant continues:

CELEBRANT “As Pastor of this community of (*Parish Name*) Parish, I present to you these members of our parish family who are about to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. I ask you to join with me in encouraging them to live a Christian life. I ask you to offer to them your prayer, your support, your help during this time of their instruction and volunteer service to the community. I ask that your way of life be to them an example of faithful Christian living and loving.”

COMMUNITY: We, the members of (*Parish Name*) Parish, promise to pray for you each day. We promise to support and help you in your catechetical instruction and in your volunteer service projects. We promise to be for you an example of faithful Christian living and loving.

CELEBRANT: At your baptism you were commissioned to be the light of the world. We do not light lamps and put them under buckets. When we light a lamp, we put it on a lamp stand and it gives light for all to see. Let your light shine like that in the sight of all. Let everyone see the good things that you do and give praise to God in heaven.

(The pastor lights candles from the Paschal candle, handing one to each candidate.) While giving the candle to the candidate he says:

CELEBRANT: (candidate’s name), “Receive the light of Christ.”

CANDIDATE: “With God’s help I will keep it burning brightly.”

APPENDIX D

THE RETREAT EXPERIENCE

DEFINITION

The retreat is an extended and structured experience of the faith, life, and worship of a Christian community. It is an attempt to create a warm, friendly, prayerful atmosphere in a total and comprehensive way. Through the experience and the environment, an invitation is given to the retreat team and retreatants to grow in their love for themselves, their families, God and one another.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE RETREAT TO THE TOTAL PROGRAM

1. The retreat provides an experience of community into which the candidates are being initiated.
2. The retreat may be EITHER the “kickoff” to the preparation OR the climax.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL YOUTH RETREATS

1. A thoughtfully chosen team consisting of both adults and teenagers (5-12 persons).
2. Extensive and prayerful preparation of the team and personal witness by the team.
3. Extensive attention to logistics and details prior to the retreat. (Good organization is essential.)
4. Group building processes.
5. Liturgical and prayer experiences including the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
6. Time for individual reflection.
7. An environment outside the “normal environment” of the participants.
8. Very clear rules and expectations and a team that is committed to those rules and expectations.
9. A team that is committed to one another and to the retreatants.
10. An atmosphere where participants are able to feel free to express their own thoughts and feelings.
11. Methodologies that appeal to the whole person—the mind, the emotions, the attitudes, the interests, the behaviors.
12. Methodologies include both active participation and listening to others.

PLANNING

Planning the retreat experience is not a one person job. It involves the creative talents of all those participating in the Confirmation program, including the candidates. A good retreat experience cannot be planned one week in advance. It is recommended that the process begin **AT LEAST** two months in advance. Planning includes, the selection of:

- Theme
- Outline
- Team
- Place
- Time
- Preparation

It is recommended that the team include youth and adults and that the majority of the team be composed of people from the local parish. The youth team should be young persons who have experienced a retreat. The adult team should be composed of those who work with young people.

SUGGESTED THEMES

- Confirmation: A commitment to God, self, and others.
- Confirmation: A call to shared responsibility and cooperation.
- Confirmation: A mission to love.
- Confirmation: A commissioning to be a person for others.
- Confirmation: An invitation to become more fully alive.
- Confirmation: I am a sign of the gifts of the Spirit.

Contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for assistance in preparing your team or to obtain resources for planning the Confirmation retreat.

APPENDIX E

ADULT SESSIONS FOR PARENTS/SPONSORS

The following concerns need to be kept in mind and applied to adult sessions for both parents and sponsors.

1. Adults bring a lived experience to the process of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. It is crucial that the adults have the opportunity to reflect upon his/her experience of the sacrament of Confirmation and to share memories and feelings from that experience. Any “theology” that describes the current practice of Confirmation should be offered only in connection to this lived/shared experience.
2. It is important to help adults consider and experience the multi-dimensional levels of these basic symbols: fire, touch, oil, wind
3. It is important that parents view this sacrament as part of the initiation process that continues on until the end of life. Confirmation’s connection with the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist need to be clarified. An historical understanding of the development of the sacrament of Confirmation would be very helpful for adults to realize the flexibility and the inter-relatedness of this sacrament.
4. Many adult Catholics (although they have been fully “sacramentalized”) have never been fully “initiated” into the Christian community. It is important to realize the potential that an adult segment of Confirmation preparation has to foster this initiation process. It is possible that such a segment might cause anxiety and a lack of confidence in the adult.
5. The Confirmation program is an opportunity for the parish community at large to experience renewed understanding and celebration of the role of the Spirit in the life of the Christian and of the sacrament of Confirmation. A plan for a parish-wide program that would touch all adults in the parish could be implemented.
6. The development of the high school junior and senior calls for the involvement of a parent/sponsor who is conscious of the young person’s “tension” to become an autonomous adult with an identity distinct from the parental generation. Thus, the parent’s/sponsor’s role needs to be one of coach, sponsor, mentor or a “co-learner” with the young person, not teacher. Parent/sponsor must be able to share deeply of his/her own beliefs and convictions and in doing so, allows the Confirmation candidate the freedom to question.
7. When using an audio-visual resource with a group of parents/sponsors, it is important to use it in such a way that it evokes a response from the adults, and enables them to share

their insights and feelings. Caution needs to be used so that an audio-visual resource is not employed only to convey information.

Specifically, it is recommended that parent/sponsor sessions be about an hour in length each time and focus on:

1. Personal experiences of Confirmation and questions arising from these experiences.
2. The sacraments of initiation and the development of Confirmation as a separate sacrament.
3. The role of the parent/sponsor. (A good resource is Guide for Sponsors by Ron Lewinski from Liturgy Training Program, 155 E. Superior Street, Chicago, IL 60611, 312-751-8382. While this guide is written for sponsors of adult catechumens, it is very adaptable to the role of the Confirmation sponsor).
4. The rite and symbols of Confirmation.

APPENDIX F

TIMELINE

Each parish needs to establish a timeline for each aspect of the Confirmation program. The following timeline represents the normal sequence. Various aspects for the program may overlap and parishes may wish to vary the sequence of the components according to their needs.

Acquire needed Baptismal Records

Convene and train team/catechists

Send invitations to parents and prospective candidates

Present introductory session for parents and prospective candidates

Register Participants

Implement Rite of Enrollment

Carry Out Catechesis

Hold Parent/Sponsor/Mentor Sessions

Present and follow up on Service Projects

Carry on Dialogue with the Candidate

Write Letters to the Bishop

Hold a Retreat

Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Prepare for celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Celebrate Confirmation

Plan and carry out post Confirmation Catechesis

Facilitate integration into Parish Life and Ministries

APPENDIX G

MUSIC FOR THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION DURING MASS

In choosing music for Confirmation, it is important not to dwell exclusively on the theme of the coming of the Spirit. This approach tends to reinforce the “isolation” of this sacrament from the other two sacraments of initiation, Baptism and Eucharist. For this reason, it is important to also include songs that are based on the broader themes of Easter, Baptism, Eucharist, the Holy Trinity and the kingship of Jesus, as well as the themes of commitment, service, discipleship, and mission.

When Confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday of Advent, Lent or Easter time, the music chosen should also be in harmony with the readings of the day and the spirit of the particular season. [*Cf Rite of Confirmation*]

During the Rite itself

- A. Profession of Faith - After the bishop proclaims the faith of the Church (This is our faith...) and all answer with an “Amen,” it is most appropriate for the assembly to express its faith with a suitable hymn.
- B. The Laying on of Hands - During this rite, it is suitable for a hymn to be sung either by the choir or by the congregation. The choice of the hymn could well reflect the calling down of the Holy Spirit which follows in the Anointing Rite or a prayer that the candidates will be deeply touched by the power of God.
- C. The Anointing with Chrism - During this time, there is no music. All should listen to the name of the person being Confirmed and the words of Anointing.