

Sacramental Preparation

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Growing in Christian Faith is a journey of a life time. Confirmation preparation is a process based on the belief that adolescents are at a significant point in their life. This process affects the candidate, the parents, the sponsors and the entire Christian community. The process should include both, evangelization and catechesis

The sacrament of confirmation, as one of the Initiation Sacraments, is completed at the table of the Eucharist. The Word of God that was spoken in baptism is now spoken more distinctly at Confirmation, asking us to choose a life in Christ: a life of discipleship and service.

The Catechetical components provide foundation for prayer and worship, service opportunities, retreat experiences and community building. This process encourages full and active participation of all involved and is a source of renewal for the whole parish community.

These guidelines provide a basic framework for the two-year Confirmation Process mandated by the Bishop for junior high school-aged adolescents. Each parish is encouraged to implement this process by developing a model which responds to the specific needs of their youth.

When is my child ready for Confirmation?

The revised Rite of Confirmation indicates that Episcopal conferences may designate the appropriate age for Confirmation. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sets the confirmation age from the age of reason (around 7 years) to 18. Since the sacramental practice for Confirmation in the United States is so diverse, it is impossible to prescribe a single catechesis for Confirmation. (NCD, 39)

The criteria for preparation and celebration of the sacrament is readiness (not necessarily grade or age level.) Parents, in dialog with the parish staff, have the right and responsibility to determine the readiness of their own child.

Diocesan Guidelines for Confirmation:

- Sacraments are a celebration of the community
- Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation
- As a norm the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation may take place in the sixth, seventh or eighth grade
- The celebration of the Eucharist is the culmination of initiation
- Candidate must attend Sunday Mass on regular basis
- Candidate must participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation proximately before Confirmation and at least three other times during the two years of preparation
- Candidate and sponsor must participate in some type of retreat experience each year. (If that is not possible, a parent/guardian may participate in the retreat day.)

Preparation for the Sacrament:

- Must take place outside of Catholic School/ Religious Education classes
- Child must have attended Catholic School or Religious Education for two years prior to receiving the sacrament.
- Parents may not fill the role of the sponsor (Canon Law 874)

The family/sponsor must ensure that their child continues their faith formation through participation in faith formation classes, youth activities and the Sunday Liturgy.

Catechesis for Confirmation:

Catechesis for Confirmation specifically teaches that Confirmation perfects the grace of baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul. It also teaches that Confirmation confers the Holy Spirit to 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, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds. (NCD 41)

Immediate preparation for Confirmation should include instruction on the rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with oil, and the words of the sacramental formula. In those dioceses in which the sacrament of Confirmation is administered to infants or young children, **catechesis for their parents and godparents should encourage them to reexamine the meaning of faith in their own lives.** (NCD 42)