

Diocese of Stockton
Updated Confirmation Program Guidelines

Introductory remarks:

In 1990, Bishop Donald Montrose sent out a memo establishing preparation guidelines for the Sacrament of Confirmation on an experimental basis. These guidelines have not only remained in place for the last thirty years, they have evolved into a rigid system of checks and balances which no longer meets the ever changing dynamics of family life. The intention of this update is to clarify the existing guidelines and introduce an updated Confirmation preparation model which includes two additions: The Confirmation Rite & Catholic Social Teaching.

I. Clarification & trainings/in-services

- a. Bringing parishes together; training on collaboration - deanery meetings, communication with Pastor and other staff members (finance committee, bookkeeper, secretary, parish school.
- b. Adjustment to High School programs - HS programs have higher attendance than in the past. Parishes will continue to adapt their program for High School aged candidates
- c. Youth Ministry - excellent opportunity for RE & YM to work together

II. Program specifications:

New model for 6th, 7th, 8th graders - Adjusting for High School

I. Rite of Confirmation - *addition*

1. 2 full years of catechesis in 6th & 7th grade
2. Confirmation Rite and reception of the Sacrament in the 8th grade
 - a) Review & rehearsal of the Confirmation Rite (ideally in the church)
 - b) DRE/Catechist decide how many meetings are needed (for example: 3-6 sessions)
 - c) No charge for this year
 - d) No materials or books

II. Catholic Social Teaching (Community Service) - *Addition* - this is not in the original guidelines although it has become part of the guidelines, therefore the committee sees this as an opportunity to teach discipleship and practice our faith

- A. Change the verbiage - since community service is used for non-faith forming purposes, its purpose/intention has become misunderstood; the committee

recommends using verbiage such as: Discipleship, Class Project family/YM projects. The project may be based on Social/Environmental Justice issues, Works of Mercy, Beatitudes. It can be referred to as: “Act of Stewardship.” We are all called to take care of God’s creation. They can be based on the Corporal works of mercy. It can be a class project so the Catechist has an opportunity to expand on what this means and who this affects them, community, etc.

- III. Mass Attendance - has become an *enforced* guideline; the point is to place accountability on the parents rather than the child. A recommendation from the committee:
 - A. Use the Liturgical calendar to include/involve the parents/family
 - 1. For example: Prepare questions for learners/family to answer about the seasons of the calendar
 - 2. Technology. Use the Remind App to communicate with parents; Attending Mass should be a good experience for the family
 - 3. Use creativity to involve the parents
- IV. General Attendance - attendance is an important part of the program because it is a sign the learner/family is actively participating in and practicing their faith. It is difficult for ministers/catechists alone to measure readiness in a child for the reception of a Sacrament, nor should they take on that responsibility. By actively involving the parents/guardians, the community, catechists, parents & the learner will confirm readiness
 - A. Rather than punishing a learner for missing sessions, suggest a family project which the learner can present in class. Aide families to form a natural desire to attend Mass - family catechesis
 - B. By placing the accountability on the family/parents rather than the learner, the parents catechize their children; the DRE or catechist will not have to “police” the attendance or create more work for themselves
- V. Reconciliation
 - A. Continue suggesting 2 times per year to encourage family participation
 - B. Names should not be recorded or written down; certificates are not to be given.
 - C. Reconciliation is to be discussed to both the parents and learners at their own level; it can be practiced so both learners/family know what to expect or how to confess but it should not be enforced in any way
 - D. Training for DRE, Coordinators, and Catechists may be necessary
- VI. Retreat Experience
 - A. Retreat guidelines - the committee will work on basic guidelines for a retreat
 - B. The focus should be on the learners, for example: what is the age group? What types of activities are offered? Who is on the retreat team - youth and young adults? Who are the speakers? Etc.
 - C. Does the program offer a Parent/Sponsor retreat?

VII. Youth Ministry

- A. Are the DRE and Youth director working together? How can they help one another, especially for high school-aged learners.
- B. What if you do not have a Youth Minister at your parish?
- C. Is there a resource for parishes if we look to the Diocese for youth ministry?

Timeline

September 2019:

- Committee finalizes timeline
- Meets with Bishop to present timeline (according to his availability)
- Bishop Cotta Approval - October (Grace makes any additional changes requested by the bishop)
- Migrant Ministry (Jose Lopez-Ceja)
- Catholic Schools (Marian Graham)
- Hispanic Apostolate (Digna Ramirez-Lopez)

October:

- PCLT (Pastoral Center Leadership Team) October 17

November: 1-2 meetings total to gather the following in (Eng/Span):

- Administrators/Bookkeepers/Business managers (who ever is in charge of finances)
- Clergy Day & Deacons - November 5? Priest/Pastors (Deanery meeting Fr. John/Bishop/Grace?/Committee members?)
- Plan B (talk to Bishop) (Hispanic Apostolate)
- DRE/CRE meeting - Committee gives a report/update, training in January-February?

December:

- Continuing conversation with DRE/CRE
- Catholic Schools (Marian Graham)

February/March 2020:

- Confirmation Catechists - have a couple of meetings (north and south diocese) gathering Confirmation catechists to discuss - Spanish/English
- Youth Ministry Coordinators (Jose Lopez-Ceja)
- Administrators/Bookkeepers/Business managers
- Parish staff; Secretaries/receptionists
- Catholic School Principals and Religion Teachers

April/May:

- Trainings - Pastors, DRE's, Catechists

August/September

- Parents

Timeline for new model

- 2019-2020 Year 0 Spreading Word (Year 1 & 2)
- 2020-2021 Year 1 Preparing the parents/DRE's (Year 2 & 1)
- 2021-2022 Year New Process starts (1 new model starts & last time for Year 2 original model)
- 2022-2023 (Year 2 new model for all, 1st & 2nd year)
- 2023-2024 (1st year for Sacramental Year - new model for 2021-22 class- no fees for this year, no books, no materials) Review & Practice Conf Rite in church; 3-6 meetings

PREP 1 (6th Grade)- FOUNDATION "Discovering the Faith"

- Retreat (Youth Ministry option)
- Foundation (discovering the faith)
- Rite of Welcoming (transition into Evangelization)

PREP 2 (7th Grade) - EVANGELIZATION "Aspiration"

- Retreat (Youth Ministry option)
- Evangelization/Catechesis
- Rite of Acceptance

SACRAMENTAL YEAR (8th Grade)

- Number of sessions is determined by the Parish
- Confirmation Date can be determined
- Confirmation Rite
- Social Service Project
- Youth Ministry (if parish has YM program)
- Invitation to ministry

Ongoing work of this committee:

Content of presentations

Retreat guidelines & resources

Recommendations for materials/curriculum