
Confirmation Preparation Policies and Guidelines

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Confirmation Guidelines

Interpreting This Document

This document is written in two sections. Please read the following descriptions to properly understand how to interpret each section.

Diocesan Policy

This section of the document is to be implemented in all parishes of the Diocese. The need to make individual exceptions for pastoral need could be considered. If a particular policy statement has been revised the date is noted and the revision is indicated in bold.

Diocesan Preferences

This section of the document is to be interpreted as Diocesan suggestions. These suggestions are offered to parishes to help them celebrate sacramental initiation with a greater faithfulness to the spirit of Church teaching. Parishes are asked to consider these suggestions seriously.

Confirmation Guidelines

Diocesan Policy - 630

630.00 Parishes will follow the *Sacrament of Confirmation Preparation Policies and Guidelines*.

631.00 *Administrative policies:*

631.10 Confirmation will be administered only to those who have been properly instructed, actively involved in the parish program, and who freely choose to be confirmed.

631.11 Parishes have the responsibility to provide adequate opportunities for preparation of candidates for this sacrament. Requirements for the Confirmation Program should be clearly communicated to both candidates and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

631.12 Confirmation preparation, as a distinct catechetical experience, must adhere to Policy 401.20 which requires 40 hours of contact time. Up to five hours of service requirements may be applied toward this 40-hour requirement. Those parishes which extend Confirmation preparation across two or three years are to plan 40 hours of contact time in each of these years.

631.13 The appropriate period for the celebration of Confirmation is to be no earlier than the ninth grade. This policy is to be understood with the following clarifications:

- Three (3) full years of catechesis prior to Confirmation is required by the policy.
- Confirmation will typically therefor be celebrated in the Spring of ninth grade.
- The combining of multiple grades into a single Confirmation class so that Confirmation may be held in a parish is not permitted.
- All students in the Confirmation year (normally 9th grade) must attend the Confirmation preparation in their home parish Faith Formation program. This includes all students enrolled in a Catholic high school.

631.14 All Confirmation names must be that of a saint or blessed of the Church. Only saints whose names can be found in *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, or saints that have been canonized by the Catholic Church since the Butler's publication may be used. The names of persons beatified and titled "Blessed" in the last 150 years may also be used. This policy does permit the use of Scripture names of the holy persons/angels of both the Old and New Testaments.

631.15 Each Confirmation candidate must request the Sacrament from the Bishop in a letter that follows the attached instructions. The appropriate personnel in the parish must review all letters to ensure that the Bishop does not receive letters from candidates indicating that they do not wish to be confirmed or containing inappropriate material.

631.16 The pastor or his representative must interview each candidate at least once at the end of the preparation process.

632.00 Parent Policies

632.10 As the primary educators of their children, parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be intimately involved in the catechesis for Confirmation. This helps them renew and strengthen their own faith and serve as a positive faith example for their children.

633.00 Retreat Policies

633.10 The Confirmation retreat is an important part of the candidate's preparation and is not to be omitted. (Pennsylvania's Act 175 offers a ready opportunity for release of students for such retreats during the school day.)

633.11 The retreat before Confirmation is a valuable opportunity for the students to build community, receive catechesis and experience conversion. The full text *Expectations for a Confirmation Retreat* can be found at: [Confirmation Retreat Expectations](#)

634.00 Service policies

634.10 Service opportunities are an important part of the Formation of young Catholics. Parishes are to provide service opportunities for the confirmation candidates based on the needs of the local community.

635.00 Educational/Formational content for Confirmation

635.10 Candidates should be taught that "Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, *imprinting an indelible character on the soul*" (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)

635.11 Candidates should be taught 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 deeds." (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)

635.12 Candidates should be taught "about the role of the Holy Spirit and the gifts and

- fruits of the Holy Spirit.” (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)
- 635.13 The preparation process must respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of the candidates.
- 635.14 The preparation process for Confirmation should include “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.” (NDC, 2005 #36, A-2, p.123)
- 636.00 Liturgical policies**
- 636.10 Specific liturgical requirements for Confirmation are promulgated each year by the Diocesan Chancellor at the time of the distribution of the Confirmation schedule. These instructions should be reviewed carefully to ensure that Confirmation is well celebrated. Questions about these directions can be directed to the diocesan Office of Worship or to the Chancellor.
- 636.20 Preparation of a liturgy with the Bishop requires the completion of the *Liturgy Preparation Sheet* which can be obtained from the Office for Divine Worship: <https://www.eriecd.org/bishop/worship.html>
- 637.00 Sponsor policies**
- 637.10 Sponsors are to be confirmed, practicing adult Catholics other than the candidate’s parents. Since Confirmation is the completion of Baptism, one’s godparent could well be a candidate for this role. Sponsors do not have to be of the same sex as the candidate.

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Diocesan Preferences

1. Eight to ten months prior to Confirmation, an invitation is sent from the pastor to the candidate along with parent and sponsor (Canon 893-Qualifications) for a meeting to explain their roles in the Confirmation process.
2. An initial interview by the pastor/staff member is strongly encouraged to determine whether the candidate is ready to begin the preparation process. This is encouraged in addition to the interview required by policy 631.16. Critical to the determination of a candidate's readiness would be the candidate's willingness to receive the Sacrament and to fulfill the requirements of the program.
3. It is suggested that the candidate's letter to the Bishop be used as an outline for the final required interview.
4. The Confirmation preparation program should be parish-based, and include Catholic high school students as well as public high school students.
5. The Rite of Intention, modeled on the Rite of the Catechumenate from the RCIA is to be celebrated with the parish community at a Sunday liturgy. [Please note #34 in the General Introduction and #67 in the Introduction to the RCIA itself]
6. Parish staff and Catholic high school staff are to cooperate in acknowledging service projects whenever possible.
7. A Rite of Acceptance, modeled on the RCIA is celebrated at a Sunday liturgy sometime after the second interview.

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Confirmation Guidelines

Letter to the Bishop

Instructions

The following issues should be addressed in the letter to the Bishop requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation. As you respond to each question, please use the question number to identify your response. The letter should be addressed and sent to the Bishop who will be ministering Confirmation at your celebration. Please respond in full sentence form.

1. Why do you feel you are ready to celebrate this sacrament?
2. Please list the service projects in which you were involved.
3. Please write a few words on how you felt about giving during your service projects. How will these experiences encourage you to further service in the future?
4. What saint's name have you chosen?
5. What characteristics of the saint or the person whose name you are taking would you hope to model in your life?
6. What was the theme of your Confirmation retreat? Please write a few words on what was the most meaningful part of the retreat for you.
7. Tell why you picked your sponsor. What in your sponsor's life tells you what it means to be a follower of Christ?
8. God calls each of us to be disciples in a particular way of life. This call is lived out through a variety of vocations such as marriage, the single life, the life of a deacon or priest or that of a religious sister or brother. Have you prayed to God asking that he reveal your vocation to you?
9. Have you ever thought God might be calling you to follow him as a priest or deacon, religious sister or brother?