



Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry

Directory for Catechesis

PREPARATION FOR AND CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

“In the sacrament of confirmation the apostles and the bishops, who are their successors, hand on to the baptized the special gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ the Lord and poured out upon the apostles at Pentecost. Thus the initiation in the Christian life is completed so that believers are strengthened by power from heaven, made true witnesses of Christ in word and deed, and bound more closely to the Church” (The Rite of Confirmation Decree Prot. N. 800/71).

“As with Baptism, catechesis for this sacrament takes place within the parish community, which has an obligation to participate in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed. The parish is the faith community into whose life of prayer and worship they will be more fully initiated. It also embodies the message to which they are to respond and gives witness, in service, to the faith they profess. The parish should strive to catechize on behalf of ‘obedience to Christ’ and ‘loyal testimony to him’ through the power of the Holy Spirit” (The National Catechetical Directory #119).

“As primary educators of their children, parents, along with sponsors, are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, besides enabling them to set a better example for their children or godchildren” (National Catechetical Directory #119).

“The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 891, hereby decrees that the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin Rite shall be conferred between the age of discretion and about sixteen years of age, within the limits determined by the diocesan bishop and with regard for the legitimate exceptions given in canon 891.”... The effective date of this decree for all the Latin Rite dioceses in the United States will be July 1, 2002. (NCCB Letter from the President 08.21.2001)

“To receive Confirmation, one must be in the state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1310).

IN THE DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN:

1. The parish community, through the pastor and his delegates, will invite the person to enroll in the immediate preparation process for Confirmation and will provide formation for those being confirmed, their sponsors, and their parents.
2. The person will be assured the freedom of making the decision to engage in the immediate preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
3. The pastor will have the final responsibility in determining, within Diocesan guidelines, the readiness of the candidate to celebrate the sacrament.
4. The age at which young people will normally be presented for the sacrament of Confirmation is during the eighth grade.
5. The Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry will establish guidelines and suggest resources to be used during the preparatory time.

PREPARATION FOR AND CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

GUIDELINES

ONGOING FAITH FORMATION

- All Catholic schools, parish faith formation processes, and home based catechesis will teach the basics of the Catholic faith by following the diocesan Curriculum for Catechesis.
- All catholic schools, parish faith formation processes, and home based catechesis will use approved textbooks for religion according to the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry guidelines.
- All Catholic schools, parish faith formation processes, and home based catechesis according to the Junior High Ministry Policy Guidelines will provide:
 - A minimum of 14 hours of community building, service and worship experience in addition of the catechetical instruction.
 - An annual retreat day.

INVITATION TO CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

- The invitation to full participation in the life of the Church begins with the faith community through its genuine sense of welcome and hospitality (The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization, Chapter 4, D).
- Pastors and their delegated catechetical leaders complement this invitation of the community by intentionally and personally inviting young people into the life and mission of the faith community and to complete their initiation into the Church (4, D).

PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Parishes will provide immediate preparation for Confirmation for all candidates including those attending parish faith formation processes, Catholic schools, and home based catechesis. This preparation will include:

- An informational session for candidates and parents on the preparation process and the selection of suitable sponsors.
- A catechetical session for candidates, sponsors and parents including catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Holy Spirit.
- A catechetical session on the Sacrament of Reconciliation for candidates, parents, and sponsors. A communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be included at this session or another time during the immediate preparation (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1310).
- A catechetical session for candidates, parents, and sponsors on initiation into the Catholic Church, and belonging to a particular diocesan and parish community.
- Rehearsal for candidates and sponsors.

Each component would be scheduled for two to three hours and spaced appropriately to allow for spiritual integration and personal readiness.

READINESS OF CANDIDATES

- Candidates are required to be baptized (Canon 889.1). The parish will secure proof of baptism.
- The sacrament must be duly and reasonably requested by the candidate (Canon 885.1). The parish could request a letter of intention.
- Persons invited will have been in a catechetical learning environment prior to and including grade 8.
- Candidates must be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew baptismal promises (Canon 889.2).
- The pastor will have the final responsibility in determining within diocesan guidelines, the readiness of the candidate to celebrate the sacrament.
- Grade 8 will be the normal age of reception. Students invited will be in grade 8 at the time the celebration is to take place. In parishes at which the celebration is every other year, some students will be in grade 9. Other high school students who have not yet been confirmed should also be invited to participate.

SUITABLE SPONSORS

- In order to more clearly express the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation, it is desirable that the godparent at Baptism also be the Confirmation sponsor. However, in practice, this is sometimes not possible (Rite of Confirmation, 5).
- Sponsors must be participating in the sacramental life of the church, and have been fully initiated (i.e., who have themselves received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist (Canon 874.3).
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years of age (Canon 874.2).
- Parents may not be sponsors for the Confirmation of their own children (Canon 874.5). Parents may “present” (i.e., accompany) their children for Confirmation (Rite of Confirmation, 21).
- Sponsor eligibility will be verified in advance according to the norms of canon law.

SUITABLE NAMES FOR CONFIRMATION

- A candidate may use their baptismal name for Confirmation.
- The selection of another name for Confirmation is respected. The name given must not be foreign to Christian sensibilities (Canon 855).

PARISH CELEBRATION

- Schedule
 - Parishes may indicate particular scheduling concerns to the diocesan official.
 - Parishes may request the celebration of Confirmation at their parish, or may request to celebrate with another parish at that parish.
 - Parishes may request to participate in a celebration of Confirmation for several parishes at St. Columba Cathedral. The diocesan official will schedule these dates.

- Parish Planning
 - The Rite of Confirmation as described in the Roman Pontifical ordinarily takes place within Mass. In other special circumstances, the rite may be celebrated outside of Mass. When this occurs, there should first be a celebration of the Word of God (13). Pastors may request this exception.
 - Parish will use the liturgy planning form provided by the diocese and will submit the form one week prior to the celebration to the Office of the Bishop.
 - Parishes will provide a rehearsal for the Confirmation ceremony which reviews:
 - The order of worship
 - The Confirmation rite
 - Singing practice
 - Basic church etiquette, dress, and liturgical posture.
- Record Keeping
 - Pastors are responsible for recording Confirmations in both the parish Confirmation and Baptismal registers. When persons are confirmed in a parish other than the one in which they were baptized, the pastor is to notify the church of Baptism so that proper notation is recorded on the Baptismal register (Canon 895).
 - Pastors or their delegate will complete the Confirmation report form and submit it to the Office of Faith Formation and Lay Ecclesial Ministry.

MYSTAGOGY ON THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

- Parishes will ensure that every fully initiated member has opportunities to deepen his/her understanding of and appreciation for the sacraments of initiation (General Directory for Catechesis, 88).
- Post-Confirmation catechesis will be provided through parish junior high and youth ministry, Catholic elementary and high schools, home based catechesis, young adult ministry, and other adult faith formation.