



CONFIRMATION GUIDELINES

Policy §1900



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§ 1900 SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR ADOLESCENT CANDIDATES SEEKING CONFIRMATION GUIDELINES

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“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

“When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”

(Acts 2:1-4)

“The Sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. The Faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 1212)

“The Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For the Sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by the word and deed.”

(CCC no. 1285)

“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 no. 1309)

“When we welcome the Holy Spirit in our hearts, Christ Himself becomes present in us and takes form in our lives, the Pope said. Through us and our actions, it will be He “who prays and forgives, gives hope and consolation, serves our brothers, helps those in need,” and helps spread communion and peace.” Pope [Francis]: Confirmation completes our bond with Christ

(General Audience 1-29-14)

§ 1900.1 CONFIRMATION READINESS

Policy §1900.1 Particular Law — Sacramental preparation for adolescent candidates seeking Confirmation is a formative process constituting a segment in the lifelong formation of children and adolescents from the age of reason, 7 to 17 years. Confirmation preparation is appropriate for those having already received the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

Guideline Procedures

I. Lifelong Formation

- a. The aim of Lifelong Formation is to foster an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church through ongoing conversion at all faith stages and ages of one's lifetime. Children and adolescence preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation are at the stage of indoctrination. They seek a fuller reality of their faith life and belonging to the Church.
- b. Sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation shall be established with families, at home, and within a parish faith formation community of learning through *Renew My Church*, Phase 5 Lifelong Faith Formation Models and supplementary materials established collaborative with the Office of Lifelong Formation.
- c. Readiness of candidates calls for a change of heart to know and love Jesus Christ. This is brought about by spiritual faith encounters at Liturgical celebrations, devotional prayer at home and in community, reflection, retreats, faith sharing, and journaling. Extended experiential learning is developed by the way of meaningful activities, parental involvement, family engagement and support, inspirational sharing of encounters of Jesus in the Bible of teachings, healings, missionary zeal, and the lived experiences of disciples and followers of Jesus Christ.
- d. Sacramental preparation shall include missionary zeal brought forth from the New Evangelization that calls for forming witnesses to proclaim the gospel message throughout one's lifetime.
- e. Pastoral engagement of a Lifelong Faith Formation process shall envision the primary role of parish families in the transformative process of evangelization, catechesis, and missionary discipleship supported by the parish faith community.
- f. Pastors, parents, sponsors, catechetical leaders, catechists, and parishioners have an obligation to authenticate the path of accompaniment for candidates to experience the merciful love of Jesus throughout a lifetime of formation.
- g. Ultimately the readiness of each candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation resides with the Pastor.
- h. Lifelong Formation fosters Evangelizing for a Domestic Church — [Four Strategies for Sacramental Preparation](#).
- i. Lifelong Formation begins following the Sacrament of Baptism. Confirmation provides opportunity to continue the formative process of mystagogia which is the deepening of our understanding of the mysteries of our faith.

II. Disposition and Age Appropriateness

- a. "Persons who are to receive Confirmation must have already received baptism. Moreover, those possessing the use of reason must be in the state of grace, properly instructed, and capable of renewing their baptismal promises."
(The Rite of Confirmation # 12, cf. Canon 889)
- b. Catholics age 18 and under are prepared for Confirmation as adolescent and high school candidates.

III. Service of Sacramental Preparation

- a. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) is dedicated to establishing sacramental preparation collaboratively with the local church to influence elementary and high school candidates. Rooted in the systematic process of Lifelong Formation, methodology for sacramental preparation is a gospel centered age-appropriate approach. Sacramental preparation nurtures experiential learning to ignite a readiness for candidates to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- b. Candidate readiness shall be fostered by the active participation of parent facilitated catechetical faith sharing and formation, Catholic role modeling and the engagement of each candidate's family faith network.
- c. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) is responsible for the official certification and ongoing formation of all catechists. Effective, well-formed certified catechists committed to their personal faith growth illustrate a best practice for our catechist certification process.

§ 1900.2 PROGRAM UNIFORMITY

Policy §1900.2 Particular Law — The length of parish sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation shall be a minimum of two years for adolescent candidates excluding those participating in the Rite for Christian Initiation (RCIA) program.

Guideline Procedures

I. Collaborative Team Efforts

- a. The Department of Parish Vitality and Mission (DPVM), through the Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF), in partnership with collaborative pastoral center ministry offices, shall accompany parishes, groupings, catechetical leaders, catechists, Catholic school principals, teachers, high school campus ministers, and youth ministers with the transformative process to develop and implement ongoing innovative sacramental programs.
- b. Providers of sacramental preparation throughout the archdiocese for the Sacrament of Confirmation are obligated to engage into relationship and dialogue with the Office for Lifelong Formation (OLF) and Office for Catholic Schools (OCS) for continuous support and guidance with the new two year Confirmation sacramental preparation policy.

II. Catechetical Leader

Role of Catechetical Leader, Director of Religious Education/Faith Formation and Coordinator of Religious Education/Faith Formation in the Confirmation process:

- a. Special emphasis shall be placed on parish catechetical leaders and catechists to foster and support family catechesis for candidates and their parents, family members, and sponsor.
- b. *“The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader.”*
(NDC pg. 224)
- c. The parish catechetical leader shall work collaboratively within the parish while remaining a liaison to facilitators of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

III. Catechists

- a. *“Through religious instruction, preparation for the sacraments, animation of prayer and other works of charity, they help the baptized to grow in the fervor of the Christian life.”*
(Guide for Catechists, 1993)
- b. **Policy 1301.01** *“All Catechists shall be skilled, knowledgeable and faithful Roman Catholics. They shall be committed witnesses to the Gospel. They shall share actively in parish life. They serve the parish by communicating Christ’s message as articulated in the magisterium of the Church.”*
- c. **Policy 1401.01** *“All Catechists shall participate in ongoing formation in faith, catechetical training and education. Parish and Catholic school Catechists are required to be certified or working toward Archdiocesan Catechist certification. They shall have a sufficient knowledge of Roman Catholic doctrine and worship, familiarity with Scripture, ability to communicate, and an understanding of developmental stages and learning styles.”*

IV. Catholic School Principals

Catholic school principals, as spiritual leaders of their school community, are invited to implement and engage in ongoing assessment of the new two-year Confirmation sacramental preparation policy by:

- a. Partnering with their Pastor and Catechetical Leader/DRE/CRE/Pastoral Associate to develop a common Confirmation sacramental preparation program amongst the school and parish religious education program.
- b. Providing relevant catechetical formation for teachers that builds capacity to offer Confirmation sacramental preparation leading to encounter and discipleship.
- c. Identifying resources with teachers that foster student and family engagement in sacramental preparation for Confirmation and the life of the parish.
- d. Encouraging teachers to develop retreats and secure retreat facilitators that actualize a deepening relationship with Christ and growing understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, with a special consideration for attending Holy Fire.
- e. Collaborating with the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) and Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) to ensure accountability.

V. Catholic School Teachers

Catholic school teachers are invited to implement and engage in an ongoing assessment of the new two year Confirmation sacramental preparation policy by:

- a. Participating in relevant catechetical formation that builds capacity to offer Confirmation sacramental preparation leading to encounter and discipleship.
- b. Working with the principal and the spiritual leader of the Catholic school community, to identify resources that foster student and family engagement in sacramental preparation for Confirmation and the life of the parish.
- c. Ensuring that the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, accompanied by prayerful reflection, are an integral part of the overall sacramental preparation program.
- d. Consulting the principal to ensure compliance with the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) and Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF).

VI. Catholic High School Campus Ministers

“Campus ministry can be defined as the public presence and service through which properly prepared baptized persons are empowered by the Spirit to use their talents and gifts on behalf of the Church in order to be a sign and instrument of kingdom in the academic worlds. The eye of faith discerns campus ministry where commitment to Christ and care for the academic world meet in purposeful activity to serve and realize the kingdom God.”

—Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future #21

High School Campus Ministers participating in Confirmation preparation are to further the facilitation of sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation by:

- a. Offering a spirit of evangelization to students in need of and interested in completing the Sacraments of Initiation.
- b. Dedicating time and talent as a catechist leader for sacramental preparation.
- c. Organizing faith sharing on and off campus being inclusive of parish opportunities.
- d. Fostering relationships and networking with Coordinators of Youth Ministry and Catechetical Leaders to become familiar with sacramental preparation options being offered by local parish communities.
- e. Empowering students and parents to engage in active ministry participation at the parish level.
- f. Offering a spirit of hospitality and welcoming to high school age teens lacking parish affiliation. Engaging in conversation with parish leaders to offer support.
- g. Actively planning and developing an encounter with our Living God through Jesus Christ at retreats with Coordinators of Youth Ministry and Catechetical Leaders.
- h. Engaging in dialogue with the Office for Catholic Schools (OCS) and the Office for Lifelong Formation (OLF) for support and guidance with the new two-year Confirmation sacramental preparation policy.
- i. Remaining family focused by sustaining family faith sharing experiences throughout the sacramental preparation process.
- j. Integration of the Six Aspects of Campus Ministry. Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future, into sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation by:
 1. Appropriating Faith
 2. Forming Community
 3. Personal Development
 4. Forming Conscience
 5. Educating for Peace and Justice
 6. Developing Leaders for the Future

VII. Parish Coordinators of Youth Ministry

“As a baptized member of the Church, Jesus Christ calls you to follow in his footsteps and make a difference in the world today. You can make a difference! In the words of the Holy Father: “Offer your youthful energies and your talents to building a civilization of Christian love . . . commit yourself to the struggle for justice, solidarity, and peace”

(Homily at World Youth Day, Denver, 1993)

Coordinators of Youth Ministry are encouraged to bridge relationships with catechetical leaders offering sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation by:

- a. Facilitating collaborative efforts with Confirmation program leaders to support and strengthen the relationship between Youth Ministry and Religious Education/Faith Formation programs.
- b. Fostering spiritual growth and missionary discipleship through youth ministry collaborated retreats and service options.
- c. Extending ministerial knowledge and experience as a catechist for sacramental preparation.

- d. Developing opportunities for graced moments for students to engage in ongoing conversation seeped in prayer and faith sharing throughout the Confirmation preparation process inclusive of mystagogia. Youth Ministry sessions, service works fostering missionary discipleship, Holy Spirit themed talks and prayer services.
 - e. Integrating USCCB goals into sacramental preparation:
 - Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.
 - Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.
 - Goal 3: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.
- excerpted from *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*

VIII. Common Standards

- a. Uniformity established by this policy shall be fulfilled throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago as constituted by Particular Law.
- b. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) shall establish common standards for proficiency of sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Common standards shall be made known throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago by the Department of Parish Vitality and Mission (DPVM) and Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) communications, collaborative works, resources formation, and training.
- c. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) shall oversee compliance with policy standards by monitoring adaptation to the two year sacramental preparation requirement for the Sacrament of Confirmation for children and adolescents.
- d. Adherence to this policy will establish a unified preparation within the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- e. Distinct advantages for sacramental preparation are innate with the standardization of the *Confirmation Curriculum* as sustained by:
 - 1. *Renew My Church*,
 - 2. *Seven Signs of Parish Vitality*, and
 - 3. *Six Tasks of Catechesis*.

IX. *Renew My Church*

Ongoing pastoral collaboration engaging *Renew My Church* will nourish the vitality of parish sacramental preparation to chart the course for greater vibrancy and vitality of our parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago for generations to come.

X. Seven Signs of Mission Vitality:

- 1. We bring people to Jesus Christ: The parish strives to evangelize its members to live more fully as intentional disciples. In turn, the parish's intentional disciples are continuously evangelizing others by making known the presence of the Church and Christ's mercy in the midst of the neighborhood.
- 2. We support each other in knowing Christ more deeply: The parish enables a lifelong process of formation for deepening one's faith and relationship with Christ by passing on the Church's teaching and Tradition to parishioners of all ages.
- 3. We encounter Christ and receive nourishment through prayer and worship: The parish is intentional in developing a culture and tradition of prayer, devotion, and well-prepared liturgy, with the Eucharist as the "Source and the Summit."

4. We build bonds among each other to sustain our life in Christ: The parish represents a genuine Catholic community that is conscious of its solidarity in Christ with the entire Church of Chicago and the Universal Church. It is inclusive and harmonious, respecting and appreciating diversity in all its forms as an asset in worship and community life.
5. We transform the lives of others through service as Christ's missionary disciples: The parish prepares and sends parishioners as missionary disciples into the world to transform society with the joy and truth of the Gospel. The parish is a beacon of faith and an advocate for justice and peace, reaching out in love to all who are in need, on the margin of society, or who live in fear and loneliness.
6. We respond to the call to holiness by journeying together with Jesus Christ: The parish accompanies the baptized on life's journey to become more Christ-centered, resistant to sin, merciful, continually attentive to building a mature, well-integrated adult spirituality, and committed to charity, peace, prayer, and virtue.
7. We take responsibility for administration and leadership of the parish as good stewards of the gifts Christ has entrusted to us: The parish thrives under the visionary leadership of the pastor, who works in collaboration with his associates, staff, and the laity to ensure that the parish's mission can fully flourish as a result of proper administration. The parish fosters a culture of stewardship and a spirituality of gratitude that inspires parishioners to generously share the gifts Christ has entrusted to them in support of the mission of the Church through the parish, the archdiocese and in the world.

XI. Six Tasks of Catechesis:

“Christ's method of formation was accomplished by diverse yet interrelated tasks. His example is the most fruitful inspiration for effective catechesis today because it is integral to formation in the Christian faith. Catechesis must attend to each of these different dimensions of faith; each becomes a distinct yet complementary task. Faith must be known, celebrated, lived, and expressed in prayer. So catechesis comprises six fundamental tasks, each of which is related to an aspect of faith in Christ. All efforts in evangelization and catechesis should incorporate these tasks.”

(NDC 20)

- a. Promote knowledge of the faith – Teach the “basics” of the faith as revealed in the signs of creation, Sacred Scripture, Catholic tradition, and human experience.
- b. Liturgical Education – Teach about the form and meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments and help individuals prepare their minds and hearts to enter into these mysteries of our faith.
- c. Moral Formation – Teach the moral teachings of the Church, which are the fulfillment of the Commandments.
- d. Teaching to Pray – Teach that a “climate of prayer” and participation in prayer invites individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- e. Education for Community Life – Teach that the human person needs to live in society. Society is not optional, but a requirement of human nature.
- f. Missionary Initiative – Teach that all Christian service is an expression of love and is performed by Christians for the purpose of building up the Kingdom of God on earth.

XII. Confirmation Curriculum:

- Prayer
- Scripture and Tradition
- Creed and Trinity
- Sacraments
- Liturgy
- Morality, Commandments, and Beatitudes
- Reconciliation – Sacrament of Penance
- Confirmation and the Holy Spirit
- Called and Sent to Mission – Evangelization
- Forming Missionary Disciples
- Service to Church, Family, and Community
- Social Justice Outreach

XIII. Textbook Considerations

The Archbishop ensures the texts or other instruments of catechesis and textbook series are in compliance with the United States Bishops Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

A text for preparation for the Sacraments should only be used as supplementary to a basal text presenting all of the material to be covered in a given year of a catechetical program (USCCB, Sacramental Preparation Protocol II, First Penance and First Holy Communion, 2013). Standard is adaptable to sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- USCCB Conformity List of Catechetical Textbooks and Series inclusive
- Conformity Review
- §1500 SELECTION OF CATECHETICAL MATERIAL
<https://www.archchicago.org/documents/70111/70567/Book+3.pdf/e3d52146-33co-41bb-a988-3313605a9753>
- USCCB Conformity Textbook List (Confirmation Preparation only) – As of August 10, 2017

Sacramental Preparation Materials

These materials are only a part of catechetical preparation and do not reflect a complete presentation of all of the elements contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that should be present in catechetical formation.

Anointed in the Spirit – A Middle School Confirmation Program	Saint Mary's Press	S/P & TM/CM ©2010
Anointed in the Spirit – A High School Confirmation Program	Saint Mary's Press	S/P & TM/CM ©2011
Be Sealed	Pauline Books and Media	S/P&TM ©1998
Call to Celebrate: Confirmation (Older Adolescents)	Harcourt (OSV Curriculum)	S/P&TM/CM ©2008
Call to Celebrate: Confirmation (Younger Adolescents)	Harcourt (OSV Curriculum)	S/P&TM/CM ©2008
Celebrating Our Faith: Confirmation	Harcourt (OSV Curriculum)	S/P&TM ©2000

Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation	Ascension Press	S/P & TM/CM ©2016
Christ Our Life: Confirmed in the Spirit	Loyola Press	S/P&TM ©1997
Confirmation	RCL Benziger	S/P&TM/CM ©2007
Confirmation: Gifted with the Spirit (7-8)	Pflaum Publishing Group	S/P&TM/CM ©2010
Confirmation, Inspired by the Spirit	William H. Sadlier, Inc.	S/P&TM/CM ©2012
Confirmation: Receiving the Gift of the Spirit (9-12)	Pflaum Publishing Group	S/P&TM/CM ©2010
Confirmed in a Faithful Community: Candidate's Handbook	Saint Mary's Press	S/P ©2006
Confirmed in a Faithful Community: Candidates Handbook (Immediate Preparation)	Saint Mary's Press	S/P ©2006
Confirmed in the Spirit (7-9)	Loyola Press	S/P&TM ©2007, 2013
Image of God (Mass Books and Confirmation)	Ignatius Press	S/P&TM ©1986-1993
The Sacrament of Confirmation	New Hope Publications	S/P ©2011, 2013
Send Out Your Spirit: A Confirmation Candidate's Handbook for Faith	Ave Maria Press	S/P&TM ©2003, 2010
The Spirit Sets Us Free: Confirmation Prep for Youth	William H. Sadlier, Inc.	S/P&TM ©2000

Materials in Other Languages

Confirmación RCL	Benziger	S&TM ©2014
Confirmación: Inspirados por el Espíritu	William H. Sadlier, Inc.	S/P&TM/CM ©2013
Confirmados en el Espíritu (7-9)	Loyola Press	S/P&TM/CM ©2007, 2013

e. Publisher Website Links

English Language

[Ascension Press - Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation](#)

[Ave Maria Press - Send Out Your Spirit: A Confirmation Candidate's Handbook for Faith](#)

[Loyola Press - Confirmed in the Spirit](#)

[Ignatius Press - Image of God \(Mass Book and Confirmation\)](#)

[New Hope Publications - The Sacrament of Confirmation](#)

[Our Sunday Visitor - Call to Celebrate](#)

[Pauline Books and Media - Be Sealed](#)

[Pflaum Publishing Group Gifted with the Spirit](#)

[Pflaum Publishing Group - Confirmation Gifted with the Spirit \(7-8\)](#)

Pflaum Publishing Group - Confirmation: Receiving the Gift of the Spirit (9-12)

RCL Benziger - Confirmation

Sadlier Religion - Believe Celebrate Live Confirmation

William H Sadlier, Inc. - The Spirit Sets Us Free: Confirmation Prep for Youth

St. Mary's Press - Anointed in the Spirit

St. Mary's Press - Confirmed In A Faithful Community

Spanish Language

Confirmación: inspirados por el Espíritu (Sadlier)

Confirmados en el Espíritu (7-9) (Loyola Press)

Confirmación (RCL Benziger)

XIV. Resources

- a. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) is committed to providing innovative sacramental preparation resources.
- b. Ongoing pastoral collaboration engaging *Renew My Church* will nourish the vitality of parish sacramental preparation and resource materials.

XV. Time of Grace

- a. A time of grace from September 2017 to June 2018 shall be extended to Confirmation sacramental preparation programs offering one year of sacramental preparation that predates the promulgation of the new Confirmation sacramental preparation policy. For assistance with this transitional process, contact the Director of Lifelong Formation or Lifelong Formation Coordinator.
- b. Programs currently offering a minimum of two years or more of sacramental preparation for Confirmation are required to continue with a minimum two year process of sacramental preparation.

XVI. Accountability

- a. Uniformity standards established by this policy shall be fulfilled throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago as constituted by Particular Law.
- b. The Department of Parish Vitality and Mission (DPVM), through the Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF), will monitor compliance to ensure accountability of the new policy two year sacramental preparation program for adolescent Confirmation. Confirmation will only be scheduled for parishes that are in compliance with the policy, keeping in mind the allowance of a time of grace is through June 2018.
- c. The Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF) Associate Director and Lifelong Formation Coordinators will be the liaisons between the Vicar General's Office and parish leaders for scheduling Confirmation. Each Lifelong Formation Coordinator will maintain an active role to collect the Vicar General Confirmation Scheduling forms from parish leaders. Each Lifelong Formation Coordinator shall present the scheduling request forms, collectively to the Office of the Vicar General by the annual deadline which is typically scheduled at the end of March.

§ 1900.3 COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Policy 1900.3 Particular Law — To the fullest extent possible the parish community consisting of clergy, parents, sponsors, family, mentors catechetical leaders, catechists, and parishioners shall actively participate in the sacramental preparation.

“Christian initiation...should be the care of the entire Christian community.”

(GDC #91)

“The church “exists to evangelize” that is, “to carry forth the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race.”

(GDC, #46, EN, #18)

Evangelization and catechesis offer a systematic process to recognize graced moments of experiencing Jesus Christ enlivened by the parish faith community to enhance outreach by service as missionary disciples.

I. Role of Bishop in the Confirmation process:

- a. *“The Archbishop is the chief catechist with primary responsibility for catechesis in the diocese and for ensuring catechists are adequately prepared for their task.”*
(Catechesi Tradendae 63)
- b. *“The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop; a priest who has this faculty by virtue of either the common law or a special concession of competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.”*
(Canon 882)
- c. *“The Chrism to be used in the Sacrament of Confirmation must be consecrated by a bishop, even if the sacrament is administered by a priest.”*
(Canon 880.2)
- d. The Archbishop ensures that the ministry of catechesis receives the support of competent personnel with the assistance of the Office of Lifelong Formation (OLF).
- e. The Archbishop makes sure that the texts or other instruments of catechesis and textbook series are in compliance with the United States Bishops Conference.
- f. The Cardinal's office and Auxiliary Bishop's offices provides a guideline for the celebration of confirmation.
- g. The USCCB provides [Guidelines for The Celebration of the Sacrament with Persons with Disabilities](#). [Loyola Press offers an Adaptive Confirmation Preparation Kit](#).

II. Role of Pastor in the Confirmation Process

- a. *“All believers have a right to catechesis; all pastors have a duty to provide it.”*
(Catechesi Tradendae 64)
- b. *“One of the highest responsibilities of the people of God is to prepare the baptized for confirmation. Pastors have the special responsibility to see that all the baptized reach the completion of Christian initiation and are carefully prepared for confirmation.”*
(The Rite of Confirmation, #1, 2, 3)

III. Role of Parents

- a. Parents and sponsors are to partake in the sacramental preparation process by active participation throughout the entire faith journey of the candidates.
- b. Parents are the primary catechists for their children. This role and responsibility of parents as the primary catechists allows for a renewed commitment to ongoing faith formation for the entire family.
- c. The accompaniment of the parish faith community and formation leaders, sacramental preparation offers a renewed vision for parents and families to nurture active learning and faith sharing with their children to bring about a vibrancy to family faith life at home and within a parish faith community.

IV. Role of Sponsors

“As a rule there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. These sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament, present them to the minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received.”

(The Rite of Confirmation #5)

V. Code of Canon Law — Chapter IV. Sponsors

Can. 892 Insofar as possible, there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed; the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament.

Can. 893 §1. To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in > can. 874 §2. It is desirable to choose as sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.

The sponsor shall be chosen as a witness and model to the Catholic faith for the candidate to emulate in faith practices through a vibrant faith life in the Catholic Church. Sponsor requirements are established by — Can. 874 §1. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

- a. Be designated by the one to be baptized (confirmed), by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;
- b. Have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;
- c. Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
- d. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- e. Not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized (or confirmed).

§ 1900.4 MISSIONARY SERVICE

Policy §1900.4 Policy of Missionary Service — Confirmation enriches the baptized with the strength of the Holy Spirit so that they can better witness to Christ in word and deed. (CCC, no. 1285) Authentic witness is fulfilled by missionary discipleship rooted in the Church's mission of faithful service.

Guideline Procedures

I. Service of Missionary Discipleship

- a. Missionary service authenticates the practice of our Catholic identity and mission while enlivening Christ-centered values in our lives.
- b. Missionary disciples witness to Christ-like actions through practical real life experiences of Christian love in service of others.
- c. Attention shall be given to developing parish service projects that foster missionary discipleship through the integration of community outreach and evangelization. Candidate's experiences shall complement learning theory, methodologies, and reflection. The vitality of active missionary discipleship serves as true witnesses to the Church's mission.

II. Catholic Social Teachings

Candidates shall engage in the mission of the Church by application of experiential learning to service rooted in the Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

Theme 1: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Theme 2: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Theme 3: Rights and Responsibilities

Theme 4: Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor

Theme 5: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Theme 6: Solidarity

Theme 7: Care for God's Creation

§ 1900.5 ANNUAL RETREAT

Annual Pre-Confirmation Retreat

- a. Candidates shall participate annually at a pre-Confirmation retreat that is deemed: age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and offers a variety of spiritual, social and catechetical experiences to ignite missionary service. Participation at Holy Fire is encouraged to engage candidates in the archdiocesan vision of an expanded purview of Church. Post-retreat dialogue, reflection and missionary service opportunities shall be provided for a comprehensive experience.
- b. Catholic school principals and teachers shall encourage teachers to develop retreats and secure retreat facilitators that actualize a deepening relationship with Christ and growing understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, with a special consideration for attending the archdiocesan retreat Holy Fire.
- c. Parish Coordinators of Youth Ministry are encouraged to lead or assist with the planning, development and implementation of Confirmation focused retreats.

General Instructions for § 1900

The Office of Lifelong Formation shall establish common standards for proficiency of sacramental preparation for Confirmation at the parish level. See Archdiocesan Confirmation Policies and Guidelines at pvm.archchicago.org/lifelong-formation/confirmation-policy.



§ 1900 SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR ADOLESCENT CANDIDATES SEEKING CONFIRMATION

§ 1900.1 Confirmation Readiness

1900.1 Particular Law — Sacramental preparation for adolescent candidates seeking Confirmation shall be a formative process constituting a segment in the lifelong formation for children and adolescents from the age of reason to 17 years having already received the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

§ 1900.2 Program Uniformity

1900.2 Particular Law — The length of parish sacramental preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation shall be a minimum of two years for adolescent candidates excluding those participating in the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program.

§ 1900.3 Community Responsibility

1900.3 Particular Law — To the fullest extent possible the parish community consisting of clergy, parents, sponsors, family members, catechetical leaders, catechists, and parishioners shall actively participate in the sacramental preparation.

§ 1900.4 Missionary Service

1900.4 Particular Law — Confirmation preparation shall include service initiatives that foster missionary discipleship through the integration of community outreach and evangelization.

§ 1900.5 Annual Retreat

1900.5 Particular Law — Confirmation preparation shall include designated time reserved for prayer, reflection, and discernment which may be in the form of an annual retreat.

General Instructions for § 1900

The Office of Lifelong Formation shall establish common standards for proficiency of sacramental preparation for Confirmation at the parish level. See Archdiocesan Confirmation Policies and Guidelines at pvm.archchicago.org/lifelong-formation/confirmation-policy.



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October 12, 2017

Dear Fathers, Catechetical Leaders, and Principals,


As we celebrate the Feast of St. John XXIII, we are encouraged to reflect upon the gifts bestowed on us by the Holy Spirit. One of the greatest of these is the opportunity to brighten the lives of the children within the Archdiocese of Chicago with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a pivotal experience for young Catholics, as they are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit and complete their initiation into the Church. Our goal is to ensure adolescents receive uniform sacramental preparation for Confirmation designed for today's youth. After consultation with the Presbyteral Council and the appropriate departments within the Pastoral Center, I have instituted a new policy for Sacramental Preparation for Adolescent Candidates Seeking Confirmation that increases the time for preparation from one year to two years. It is in conformity with our commitment to lifelong faith formation and became effective July 1, 2017. The new policy can be viewed at <https://pvm.archchicago.org//lifelong-formation/confirmation-policy>. The enclosed materials from the Vicar General's Office go into greater detail about guidelines for compliance with the policy and the new scheduling process.

As scripture reminds us, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19: 13-14). It is from the wellspring of God's love for each of us that the walk of faith continues for our young people.

Your commitment to appropriate catechesis is essential to adolescent readiness for the sacramental life. It is with this in mind that we encourage you to work hand-in-hand with our Lifelong Formation team to accomplish these new policy goals.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago