

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH CONFIRMATION ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE

The following Guidelines for Youth Confirmation are intended to assist parishes as they plan their Confirmation preparation process. The Guidelines are based on the *Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies* and on directives from Archbishop Michael Sheehan regarding Confirmation for High School age young people.

Please consult the *Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies--Confirmation*, available at <http://archdiosf.org/Offices/SacramentalPolicies/SacramentPolicy.html> or the directors of the Office of Religious Education, the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, or the Office of Worship and Christian Initiation for further assistance.

I. At what age are young people confirmed in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe?

- A. The ordinary age for Confirmation in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe is during the High School Years.
- B. The actual age during the high school years is determined by the local pastor and the readiness of the young person.
- C. Catholic adults who are not yet confirmed participate in separate Adult Confirmation Preparation sessions at their parish. They may be confirmed at the parish celebration with the youth candidates, or at an Archdiocesan Adult Confirmation when offered.
- D. Young people of confirmation age who have not yet received First Communion, are appropriately prepared for both sacraments through the RCIA process.

II. What is required of the young people preparing for Confirmation and what is expected of their parents or guardians?

- A. **Young people** desiring Confirmation are expected to participate in the parish program of preparation which will include:
 - 1. Completing a year of catechesis or religious formation (either at the parish or in a Catholic school) before beginning the final period of Confirmation preparation at the parish.
 - 2. Participation in the classes offered in the parish for a final period of four to six months of confirmation preparation.
 - 3. Participation in community outreach activities defined by the parish to help the young people learn and experience ways to actively live their faith.
 - 4. Participation in the retreat(s) offered by the parish to help spiritually prepare the young people for Confirmation.
 - 5. Reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) during the period of preparation for Confirmation.
 - 6. Participation in the practical and liturgical preparations and meetings required by the parish.
 - 7. Writing a letter to the Archbishop answering the questions that he has asked them to address, and turning it in on time to the parish.
 - 8. Studying the Saints and then choosing the name of a Saint for their Confirmation name. The Saint will serve as a role model in their Catholic life and someone they can pray to for guidance and intercession. They may also choose their Baptismal names.

9. Choosing a Confirmation sponsor who will help guide them on their faith journey and whom they can look to as a role model in living the Catholic faith today. They may choose their Baptismal sponsors as Confirmation sponsors. Otherwise, they may choose only one sponsor who meets the qualifications defined in Section III below.

B. Parents or Guardians of Confirmation candidates are expected to

1. Assist the young person in faithfully living the Catholic life by example and word.
2. Support the young person in freely choosing to be confirmed.
3. Be sure that the young person fulfills the requirements for Confirmation outlined in Section IIA above.
4. Promptly supply the required documents and requested information to the Confirmation Coordinator.
5. Participate in any meetings or classes required by the parish.

III. What is the role of the Confirmation sponsor and what qualifications are necessary for this ministry?

- A. Sponsors must comply with the qualifications included in *Canon Law*, in the *Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies* and in the Archbishop's directives. A confirmation sponsor must:
 1. Be designated by the one to be confirmed
 2. Be at least 16 years old
 3. Be a confirmed Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken
 4. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared (if married, married in the Church)
 5. Not be the father or mother of the one confirmed.
- B. It is desirable that the confirmation sponsor, if possible, be the baptismal sponsor of the one confirmed.
- C. There is only one Confirmation sponsor for each candidate, and the sponsor may be either male or female. The only exception is: a candidate's two Baptismal sponsors may both serve as the sponsors for Confirmation.
- D. Sponsors should serve as role models and mentors, helping the candidates to respond to God's call and live the Christian life in the faith community and in the world.
- E. When possible, sponsors should participate in sessions with candidates, and they are expected to participate in sessions specifically designed for sponsors.

IV. Who is involved in preparing young people for Confirmation?

- A. The Pastor of the parish is responsible for the overall program of formation and preparation of Confirmation candidates and sponsors
- B. The Confirmation Coordinator works under the direction of the Pastor or his delegate to coordinate the formation and preparation.
- C. Certified parish catechists who are well grounded in their faith and Catholic practice, and knowledgeable of Catholic teaching assist with the formation.
- D. The parish youth ministry team, including certified parish youth ministers, assist the young people in integrating their Confirmation preparation with all other aspects of living the Catholic way of life.

- E. Parents and sponsors of those to be confirmed offer support for the candidates and offer personal witness of their faith and Catholic life.
- F. Invited guests and presenters, who may be adults or already confirmed young people, may be asked to offer personal testimony about their faith or to give a presentation in an area of expertise or interest.

V. What documentation and recording are required at the parish?

- A. The parish Confirmation date will be established according to the directives sent from the Archbishop's office. The Confirmation Coordinator follows those directives, the pastor's directives and parish policies for reserving the needed facilities and communicating with Archbishop's office regarding the date.
- B. The following documents must be collected by the parish Confirmation Coordinator at the beginning of the preparation period and **prior** to the celebration of Confirmation:
 - 1. A current baptismal certificate from the candidate's parish of Baptism.
 - 2. If the sponsor is from another parish, documentation from the sponsor's parish ascertaining his/her status as a registered practicing Catholic.
- C. A **month before** the scheduled Confirmation, the Confirmation Coordinator collects the letters to the Archbishop written by each candidate and sends the letters as a whole to the Archbishop.
- D. The following must be done **after** the celebration of Confirmation:
 - 1. Refer to *Sacramental Records Policy of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe* for important information about proper entries in the Confirmation Register.
 - 2. Required information is entered in the parish *Confirmation Book*.
 - a. Name of the confirmed
 - b. Name of parents
 - c. Name of sponsors
 - d. Name of the minister of Confirmation
 - e. Date and place of the conferral of Confirmation
 - f. It is helpful, though not essential, to list the place and date of Baptism in the Confirmation Register
 - 3. Notification of the Confirmation is sent to the parishes in which the Confirmandi were baptized so the information can be entered in the Baptism Registers at those parishes. This notification should include:
 - g. Name of the confirmed person
 - h. Date of Baptism
 - i. Place and date of Confirmation
- E. If the celebration of Confirmation takes place in a parish other than the home parish, each parish that prepares candidates for that celebration is responsible for collecting the documentation and recording the information in the parish *Confirmation Register*.
 - 1. Each preparing parish will send a list of those eligible for Confirmation to the hosting parish two weeks prior to the celebration.
 - 2. In the event that an individual candidate is unable to receive Confirmation on the day scheduled at his or her parish, the candidate will ask for a letter from the pastor, giving permission to be confirmed at another parish. The candidate is responsible for contacting and then delivering the letter to the parish where he or she wishes to be confirmed, along with other necessary documents.

VI. What should be included in the curriculum/classes for young people preparing for Confirmation?

A. Curriculum Guidelines for Adolescent Catechesis

Since Confirmation preparation is one part of **lifelong catechesis for young people**, it is important to see it in this broader context. Please consider all three of the aspects below in planning the Confirmation preparation program.

1. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops calls for **ongoing catechesis for young people of all ages** throughout the high school years to be offered by parishes and schools, both before and after Confirmation. The USCCB document *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* provides guidance in creating doctrinal content of catechetical texts and materials that completely define and present the teaching of the Church for young people.
To read this document, visit <http://www.usccb.org/education/framework.pdf>
2. The *Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies* (12.1) state that **at least one year of catechesis or religious formation** at the parish **or** in a Catholic school should have recently been completed by young people **before they begin the final preparation period for Confirmation**. The *ASF Sacramental Policies* (12.2) provide a partial list of topics to be covered in catechesis during the high school years in parishes:
 - a. Basic knowledge of the Scriptures
 - b. How to use Scriptures
 - c. An understanding of the Sacramental Life of the Church
 - d. Principles of decision-making based on Christian morality
 - e. Prayer
 - f. Spiritual enrichment
 - g. Service to the community
3. According to the *Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies* (12.2) a **final preparation period of four to six months** of Confirmation preparation is held at the local parish for all candidates, including those attending Catholic high schools. Catechesis during this final preparation for Confirmation should include:
 - a. Orientation
 - b. Catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - c. Spiritual and community outreach activities (Service)
 - d. Retreats
 - e. Practical and Liturgical arrangements for the celebration
(See *The Sacrament of Confirmation Liturgical Guidelines*)
 - f. The four to six month period of proximate preparation for Confirmation will include a number of sessions for parents and sponsors to aid them in their mentoring roles. (12.4 – *ASF Sacramental Policies*)

B. List of Texts Approved by the USCCB

Archbishop Michael Sheehan expects all parishes and Catholic schools to use **only** catechetical texts **approved by the USCCB**.

1. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee on the Catechism reviews on a quarterly basis all catechetical texts submitted to them by publishers.
2. The purpose for their review is to ensure their conformity to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The USCCB Ad Hoc Committee approves those catechetical texts that are complete and reflective of the content of the faith as expressed in the *Catechism*.
3. Below are the texts approved as of July 2009 for preparation on the Sacrament of Confirmation:
 - a. *Call to Celebrate: Confirmation* (Older Adolescents) – Harcourt Religion Publishers
 - b. *Call to Celebrate: Confirmation* (Younger Adolescents) – Harcourt Religion Publishers
 - c. *Celebrating Our Faith: Confirmation* – Harcourt Religion Publishers
 - d. *Christ Our Life: Confirmed in the Spirit* – Loyola Press
 - e. *Confirmation* – RCL Benziger
 - f. *Confirmation: Gifted with the Spirit (7/8)* – Pflaum Publishing Group
 - g. *Confirmation: Receiving the Gift of the Spirit (9-12)* – Pflaum Publishing Group
 - h. *Confirmed in a Faithful Community: Candidate's Handbook* – Saint Mary's Press
 - i. *Confirmed in a Faithful Community: Candidate's Handbook* (Immediate Preparation) – Saint Mary's Press
 - j. *Confirmed in the Spirit (7-9)* – Loyola Press
 - k. *The Sacrament of Confirmation* – New Hope Publications
 - l. *Send Out Your Spirit* – Ave Maria Press
 - m. *The Spirit Sets Us Free: Confirmation Prep for Youth* – William H. Sadlier, Inc.
 - n. *Confirmados en el Espiritu (7-9)* – Loyola Press
 - o. *El Espiritu Santa nos Libera: Preparando a los jóvenes para la Confirmación* – William H. Sadlier, Inc.
 - p. *Un Llamado a Celebrar: la Confirmación* – Harcourt Religion Publishers
 - q. *The Spirit Sets Us Free: Confirmation Prep for Youth* – Vietnamese Catechetical Community U.S.A.

For a most current list, go to: <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf> - updated quarterly

VII. How can we motivate young people to continue their formation after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?

- A. Develop a parish vision of Comprehensive Youth Ministry and invite young people to participate in all aspects of parish life.
 1. When Confirmation preparation is part of a program of Comprehensive Youth Ministry in the parish, young people become part of the overall vitality and life of the parish.
 2. Giving young people an experience of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation draws them into ever deeper participation in the life of Christ in the Church, and increases their desire to know and live their faith.

- B. A comprehensive approach to youth ministry utilizes the eight components identified in the 1997 USCCB document [*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Youth Ministry*](#) :
1. “The Ministry of Advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community” and within society. (RTV, p. 27).
 2. “The Ministry of Catechesis most effectively promotes the faith development of young and older adolescents when the curriculum is focused on important faith themes of the Church and on the developmental needs and life experiences of adolescents.” (RTV, p. 30)
 3. “The Ministry of Community Life builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures Catholic faith.” (RTV, p. 34)
 4. “The Ministry of Evangelization shares the good news of the reign of God and invites young people to hear about the Word Made Flesh.” (RTV, p. 36) The ministry of evangelization incorporates several essential elements: witness, outreach, proclamation, invitation, conversion, and discipleship.
 5. “The Ministry of Justice and Service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts.” (RTV, p. 38)
 6. “The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities.” (RTV, p. 40)
 7. “The Ministry of Pastoral Care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care for people, especially those who were hurting and in need.” (RTV, p. 42) It involves promoting positive adolescent and family development through a variety of positive (preventive) strategies, caring for adolescents and families in crisis through supports, counseling, and referral to appropriate community agencies; providing guidance as young people face life decisions and make moral choices, and challenging systems that are obstacles to positive development.
 8. “The Ministry of Prayer and Worship celebrates and deepens young people’s relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the Spirit at work in their lives, it incorporates young people more fully in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people, and it fosters family rituals and prayer.” (RTV, p. 44)

To read more on Adolescent Catechesis and Comprehensive Youth Ministry, see <http://www.nfcym.org/resources/components/index.htm>