

An essential Catholic belief is that Christ is present as the community gathers for the liturgy of the Word and liturgy of the Eucharist. Weekly celebration of mass together as a family provides a strong example and deepens the faith commitment of the one seeking Confirmation.

Ordinarily the candidate will have participated in the parish religious education program for at least two years prior to Confirmation.

Proper documentation must be on file with the parish office, including parish registration, a recent baptismal certificate, sponsor documentation, etc.

Parents and sponsors must actively participate in formation events designed to help them grow in their faith, to hand the faith on to the candidate, to faithfully celebrate the sacrament, and help the candidate to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

# Roman Catholic Confirmation Guidelines And Customs

St. Cecilia Catholic Church  
2159 Highway 195  
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# CONFIRMATION

*By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, Confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible.*

Christian Initiation: General Instruction, n. 2

*This booklet has been prepared by parishioners of St. Cecilia Catholic Church to help our parish community review the Church's vision, understanding, teaching, and discipline of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the local Customs for celebrating the Sacrament at St. Cecilia Catholic Church.*

a deeper relationship with the Trinity leading to a deeper commitment. The call to an active participation in God's plan of salvation is heightened during the retreat experience which allows time to reflect, contemplate, and freely discuss personal spiritual moments.

C. Guidance: The sponsor is an important dimension in the candidate's spiritual and holistic journey. That role does not end with Confirmation but continues as mentor, spiritual companion, and witness before the community.

The following is also required of the sponsor:

- a. must be approved by their pastor
- b. must be committed to comfortable and consistent involvement with the candidate
- c. must be willing to enhance their own spiritual journey through the sponsorship process
- d. must participate in a retreat with the candidate
- e. must fulfill diocesan and parish Safe Environment and Youth Protection requirements

D. Service: Community service projects provide the candidate with practical application and appreciation of fuller membership in the Church. An essential element of any service is the time to reflect on how God was present in service to others.

The parish community should be intimately involved in the sacrament's preparation. Enrollment of candidates should take place when the parish community is assembled. The celebration of the sacrament itself should include participation of the community of faith.

It is preferred that there be only one sponsor for each person confirmed; however, two sponsors are permissible to accommodate local custom.

The sponsor should be selected by the candidate and the parents.

The sponsor ideally should be a member of the parish community who can share in the faith journey of the candidate.

The religious education program ideally will utilize four elements to ensure that each candidate's reception of Confirmation is an age-appropriate informed decision to participate more intensely in their relationship with God and with the life of the Church.

A. Intellectual Formation: Confirmation students should meet often to explore, reflect, and discuss the Sacrament of Confirmation. Particular attention should be given to the teachings of the Church, Sacred Scripture, and Tradition.

B. Spiritual Formation: Confirmation preparation for some is the first opportunity to explore principles beyond cultural and societal standards. The student is exposed to the possibility of

# *Confirmation*

## INTRODUCTION

Confirmation is one aspect of the Church's total initiation practice. Confirmation should be related to the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist and should be experienced as such as much as it is possible.

## ADULT CONFIRMATION

If adults are not baptized, if they are members of another denomination, or if they are uncatechized, they can become candidates for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) for which there is a specific process outlined in the liturgical books of the Church.

For baptized Catholic adults, the process of preparation for Confirmation should be sensitive to and consistent with the faith development of the candidate determine through the discernment process.

Preparation should include formal adult catechesis to include a review of the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Reconciliation.

There should also be a discussion of the Gospels focusing on call to discipleship, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, embracing the responsibility that comes with being more closely bound with Christ, and the obligation to spread and defend the faith — both by word and by deed as witnesses of Christ and the Good News.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be encouraged prior to Confirmation.

Candidates should participate in a rite of welcoming at a weekend mass so that the parish

community might know them and pray for them by name during their time of catechesis.

The period of catechesis should include an orientation to active participation in parish ministry. Candidates should be encouraged to make a commitment to service in the parish, local hospital, soup kitchen, or similar work if possible. The catechesis might include orientation to various parish ministries as well as instruction on the concept of stewardship of time, talent, treasure, and tradition.

The candidate should have the opportunity to participate in a spiritual day of formation or retreat prior to the day of celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation. This could take the form of a special parish day, city-wide day, or a vicariate-wide day of prayer for the adult candidates.

Parish clusters may form a team of persons to offer a series of evenings for adults. The process could include a faith sharing component using the themes of conversation like those outlined in the RENEW process, namely: call, response, discipleship, empowerment by the Spirit, and evangelization.

#### **CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE**

Those children of catechetical age (age 7) who seek Baptism or Full Communion within the Catholic Church should normally participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children (RCIA/C) using the specific section in the *Appendix* of RCIA/C for use in the United States.

## **Customs for Confirmation**

### **At St. Cecilia Catholic Church**

In addition to the forgoing guidelines, the candidates should be thoroughly instructed as to the meaning of the Rite of Confirmation, its symbolism, and practical implications. Catechesis on the meaning of Church and the candidates' involvement in the life of the Church is also included.

To formalize the candidate's request for Confirmation, a ceremony of commitment should be held when the parish community is present to witness the intent of the candidate to seek Confirmation.

The parish should provide formation programs for parents and sponsors to enable them to better understand the history of the sacrament and its meaning for Christian living. As the primary teachers of their children, parents, along with sponsors, should be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith as well as enable them to set an example for their child.

The candidates should actively participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish. Catechesis should enable the candidates to articulate a sense of God and God's presence in their lives. A retreat experience and a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation should precede Confirmation when possible.

- ◆ A chastity education component is to be incorporated into each Confirmation program. The approved curricula are: *Family Honor*, and *Theology of the Bible for Teens*, M.S. edition.
- ◆ Prayer should be an important component of preparation.
- ◆ A retreat should be offered, however the inability to participate should not be a reason for delaying the sacrament.
- ◆ All Confirmation preparation activities should be directly related to receiving the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Candidates should write spontaneous letters of anticipation to the bishop if the catechist judges this would aid the candidate's preparation.

#### RITUAL GUIDELINES

The appropriate dress for Confirmation is "Sunday Best" meaning sport coats and ties for boys and dresses for girls. Formal robes should not be worn.

Stoles are not a proper symbol for Confirmation and should not be worn.

The readings of the day are always used for Sunday Confirmation liturgies.

The Mass for Confirmation should be used where Liturgical laws permit. The Gloria is not said or sung in the votive mass. Red vestments are worn.

The right to receive each sacrament is balanced by the responsibility of being properly prepared. Every available resource should be provided to teach the candidate of the appropriate age what he or she needs to know in order to worthily receive each sacrament. In many cases, this will mean formal classroom instruction, though in some circumstances it may mean appointing a sponsor who will work with the candidate individually.

Formation into a life of faith-commitment takes time. Catechesis should not be rushed. The total preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation should not normally be restricted by a grade level curriculum.

Each parish should make provisions for Confirmation preparation.

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist are so interrelated that they are required for full Christian Initiation (OCIA #842.2).

Just as with adults, the parish priest is authorized to confirm children who are no longer infants (OCIA #883.2) and the candidate for Confirmation should be at about the age of discretion, i.e. seven years old (OCIA #891).

Canon Law supports a pastoral practice in which children of catechetical age are initiated into the Catholic Church through the preparation for and celebration of the unified Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.

## PREPARATION

The effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

Preparation for Confirmation should be a joyful and pleasant experience. It should involve not only prayer and study, but also service to the Church and to the community. The catechesis on prayer should emphasize the mass as the most powerful prayer along with daily personal prayer.

Candidates should have a ready understanding of the Seven Sacraments and Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Candidates should participate in the four dimensions of stewardship as far as possible by sharing their Time by visiting those who are sick, alone, or in need, sharing their Talent by using their gifts and abilities to assist others, sharing their Treasure by giving a portion of their money to help others in need, and sharing their Tradition by discussing their faith and inviting others to embrace it.

The Sacrament of Confirmation confers the fullness of the Holy Spirit such that it:

- ◆ Unites one more fully to Christ
- ◆ Increases the gifts of the Spirit
- ◆ Perfects the bond with Christ
- ◆ Gives special strength of the Holy Spirit: to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, boldly confessing the name of Christ and being proud of the Cross.

(CCC 1303)

Candidates must choose a saint's name for their Confirmation name. Baptismal names may be used if they are a saint's name. Candidates should research the life of their saint so that the name will have special meaning and importance in their lives.

Sponsors for Confirmation must be practicing Catholics who have been confirmed, are at least sixteen years of age, and are in full communion with the Catholic Church. The sponsor should not be the parent. The sponsor should be a role model for the person being confirmed.

Notification of reception of the sacrament must be sent to the church of Baptism.

## CATECHETICAL GUIDELINES

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the candidate toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit's actions, gifts, and biddings. This will prepare the candidate to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. Catechesis should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ and to the parish community as part of the universal Church. (CCC 1309)

To these ends the following are recommended:

- ◆ Preparation for Confirmation should be presented as one more step in the lifelong formation of a Catholic. It should not give the appearance of graduating from formation.