

CONFIRMATION POLICY

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. Initiation involves the concern of the whole Church, for it is the life-blood of the Church. Therefore, bishops, pastors, catechists, candidates, sponsors, parents, and all parishioners should be involved.

Adult Confirmation

1. If adults are not baptized, if they are members of another denomination, or if they are uncatechized, they can become candidates for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults for which there is a specific process outlined in the liturgical books of the Church. See "Order of Christian Initiation of Adults," pages A-1 through A-7.
2. For baptized Catholic adults, the process of preparation for confirmation should take a minimum of twelve weeks of instruction. It should be sensitive to and consistent with the faith development of the candidate. The pastor or other competent person may determine that faith development through an interview and discernment process. A sample form to aid in the interview process may be found on page D-5. The process of preparation should include formal adult catechesis to include a review of the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist and reconciliation. Additionally, a discussion of the gospels and our call to discipleship, to focus on the Gift of the Holy Spirit, on 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.
3. Participation in the sacrament of reconciliation should be encouraged prior to confirmation.
4. Candidates should participate in a rite of "welcoming" at a weekend Mass so that the parish community might know them and be praying for them by name during their time of catechesis.
5. The period of catechesis should include an orientation to active participation in parish ministry. Candidates should be encouraged to make a commitment of at least ten hours of service in the parish, local hospital, and soup kitchen or similar if possible. The catechesis might include orientation to various parish ministries as well as instruction on the concept of stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
6. 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 or city-wide day or a vicariate-wide day of prayer for the adult candidates.

Parish clusters or vicariates may consider forming 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.

It is suggested that the bishop schedule the celebration of confirmation for adult candidates at least two times during the year near Pentecost and on or near the Feast of the Epiphany and that these celebrations be held alternately on the east and west sides of the diocese.

Children of Catechetical Age

Those children of catechetical age (age 7) who are seeking baptism or full communion within the Catholic Church are to participate in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults and Children (OCIA). Parishes which have children seeking confirmation should follow the specific section in the Appendix of OCIC for use in the United States.

Teen-Age Confirmation

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 included in a grade level curriculum.

Each parish in the Diocese of Las Cruces should make provision for confirmation preparation. Candidates should be in their junior year of high school or, if for whatever reason are out of school, at least sixteen years of age. With regard to age, exceptions may be made based on pastoral judgment. Such decisions should include consultation with the parish's coordinators of youth ministry and/or confirmation. The diocesan office of youth ministry may also be consulted and should be consulted when the parish has difficulty reaching a decision of its own. Exceptions should not become the norm. (Revised November, 1999).

These youth will participate in a process of confirmation catechesis and liturgical celebration. Catechesis should be designed to include the following components:

1. The candidates will participate in a one year program of catechetical formation which shall consist of at least thirty hours. It is hoped that prior to the immediate preparation for the reception of the sacrament these candidates would have been regularly and actively participating in religious formation as provided by the parish.
2. Catechetical formation of the candidates should be patterned after the catechumenal model of faith development.
3. 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 appropriate.
4. It is appropriate to use some process by which the candidate requests confirmation; e.g., a letter to the pastor. These requests should receive some pastoral reply. To

formalize this request by the candidate and the response of the pastor, a ceremony of commitment should be held when the parish community is present to witness to the intent of the candidate to seek confirmation.

5. 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 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 as well as enable them to set an example for their youth. A minimum of four contact hours of preparation for parents and sponsors is required.
6. Preparation for confirmation involves some involvement in Christian witness. This experience should flow naturally from service involvements that are already a normal part of parish life and the ongoing youth ministry of the parish. A minimum of ten hours of their service is recommended.
7. The candidates should be actively participating 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.
8. The parish community should be intimately involved in the preparation that the candidates are experiencing. Enrollment of candidates in the process of confirmation preparation should take place when the parish community is assembled and the celebration of the sacrament itself should include participation of the community of faith.
9. In order to manifest the close relationship of confirmation to baptism, it is preferred that the candidates retain their baptismal names. However, a special name may be chosen if desired, in which case it should be that of a recognized saint.
10. The confirmation is to be recorded in the register of the parish in which the sacrament is celebrated. Notation is also made in the baptismal register and sent to the church of baptism.
11. It is preferred that there be only one sponsor for each person confirmed; however, two sponsors are permissible (revised 1/24/92). The sponsor:
 - a. must be at least sixteen year old;
 - b. must be a practicing Catholic leading a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
 - c. must be fully initiated;
 - d. must not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

- e. may be of either sex, but it is important that the candidate be able to identify with the sponsor in terms of Christian living;
 - f. may not be the parents; however, parents may present their son or daughter to the bishop if there is also a sponsor;
 - g. is to be selected by the candidate and his/her parents;
 - h. ideally should be a member of the parish community who can share in the faith journey of the candidate.
12. The sponsor should assist in the catechetical and liturgical preparation for the sacrament, accompany the candidate to celebrate the sacrament, and help the candidate to fulfill his/her baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The information entered in this questionnaire is privileged communication and will not be divulged to anyone without prior consent except to your sponsor.

1. Name: _____

Your maiden name if applicable: _____

When were you born: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

What city and state/country is your birthplace: _____

Current address: _____

Home phone: _____ Duty/Work phone: _____

2. Have you been baptized? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when? _____

In what religion? _____

Name and location of Church: _____

Current baptismal record brought in on _____

3. Have you made your First Communion? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, name and location of church _____

4. Have you chosen a sponsor? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, sponsor's name: _____

Phone number: _____

May we contact sponsor on your behalf? Yes _____ No _____

5. Do you consider yourself a practicing member of the Church? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how? _____

If no, please explain: _____

Are you or have you ever been a participating or practicing member of another Church?

Yes _____ No _____

Church name: _____

Denomination: _____

Where: _____

Did you go to Sunday school or Bible school? Yes _____ No _____

6. Part of being a Catholic Christian is participating in social outreach. Are there some areas in which you are interested? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please indicate which: _____

Have you participated in community outreach (food drives, charitable works, etc.,?)

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list: _____

7. What is your current status?

Single _____ Engaged _____ Married _____

Separated _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____

Living with a partner _____

If married, is this your first marriage? Yes _____ No _____

Name of spouse: _____

Date of ceremony: _____

Place: _____

Married by: Catholic priest _____ Non-Catholic minister _____

Civil official _____

Religion of spouse at time of ceremony: _____

Was your spouse previously married? Yes _____ No _____

Explain: _____

Have you been previously married? Yes _____ No _____

If so:

Name of former spouse: _____

Date of Ceremony: _____

Place: _____

Religion of former spouse at time of ceremony: _____

Date of legal divorce: _____

8. Why have you presented yourself for confirmation?

9. Is there anything else that you think we should know that will help us prepare you for confirmation?

INTERVIEW DATE: _____

INTERVIEWED BY: _____

PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE _____

(Pastor, Deacon, DRE) Signature