

Confirmation - Recommended Best Practices



Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

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Keep it simple

- Focus on your own *divine intimacy*
 - Have a regular prayer life - this is not optional
 - Partake in the Sacraments
 - Spiritual Direction/Spiritual Reading
- Create contexts where *authentic friendship* can thrive
 - Promote and encourage Intentional friendships
 - Develop relationship through sports, games, adventures, meals, etc.
- Cast a vision for *spiritual multiplication* and creating “disciple makers”
 - Develop a core (adult missionaries) team and a leadership (high school missionaries) team
 - Pour into a few, so that they might pour into a few
- The process of evangelization takes the form of accompaniment – which will require a team of leaders (1 leader to 5-6 teens by same gender – see small groups below)

Retreat experiences: retreats, conferences, camps and trips

- Attitudes can shift
- Fraternal bonding and trust building
- Much-needed solitude to hear the voice of Christ
- Recommend at least 1 retreat experience – including an experience of the greater church

Eucharist and confession

- Intimacy with Jesus Christ is everything – focus on helping the teens have an encounter – know God not just about God
- Provide opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation
- Sunday mass attendance (pre-requisite and during preparation)
- Incorporate adoration into preparation so they can experience the Eucharist

Service

- We are drawn out of ourselves
- Focus on direct service with people & less on service like building a home
- Have your service fit the criteria for Catholic schools – do it as a parish with parents/sponsors.
- Don't require hours (check boxes) – Focus on experiences
- Prepare ahead of time to seeing Christ's face in the poor (life-changing) and debrief afterwards (where was God)? What was hard/uncomfortable?
- Consider the possibility of your youth heading up a sister-parish-type relationship with a community that is in need

Small community

- Youth Ministry or small group leader meeting 1 on 1 with confirmandi, and then with parent to kick off the year. Helps us get to know the teen, why they are here, and how open they are.
- Group friends together into groups between - 5-6 students to one leader
- Allow for ample time for sharing to become deep & intimate
- Retreats, trips and conferences can help to forge these groups
- Address the 5 needs of adolescents by your ministry contexts - link

Opportunities for accompaniment/less classroom structure

- Confirmation is not a graduation; community over classrooms - no desks, workbooks, lectures - don't call it class
- Confirmation is one step along the path of discipleship - should be incorporated in the plan for youth discipleship
- Gauge the knowledge of the students but focus on the kerygma and student questions - evangelization before catechesis - assume nothing

Face the difficult facts about your situation with optimism and creativity

- Optimism is the practice of the theological virtue of hope
- You can only work in your circle of influence. Be at peace with that and maximize what you can do with what you are given.
- Change takes time - progress over perfection - evaluate each year - learn from others

Invite parents into discipleship, not hoop-jumping

- If you constantly talk about requirements, then you will end up with a program that revolves around requirements, and not Jesus Christ
- Ask parents to become prayer warriors and partner with them
- Consider requiring confirmation parents get involved in adult formation and have a few opportunities to pray, learn, serve with their kids

Confirmation Sponsors

- Expectation meeting: monthly discipleship meeting, going to mass together, accompanying the teen.
- Ways to connect teen and sponsor:
 - Selection of **saint name** with sponsor
 - **Why I want to be confirmed letter** to pastor with sponsor
 - **Faith journey reflection** with sponsor

Discernment of Gifts

- Strengths finders or some sort of inventory to examine what are the gifts god has given them and help them discern how to use those gifts for the kingdom

Commitment & flexibility:

- If they want the sacrament - work with teens when conflicts occur
- Parents should require their kids to go through confirmation prep - but in the end they decide if they want the sacrament (must have freedom)
- Have options for retreats/service and make up options for confirmation nights.

Sample confirmation session (1.5-2 hours)

- Prayer
- Meal
- Teaching (20 max) using recommended resource
- Small group discussion on topic (35-40 min): prayer, high/low of week, questions on topic
- Large groups processing of topic considering small group discussion
- Closing prayer in front of Eucharist/Tabernacle

Confirmation topic:

- Order of topics is important & build off each other
- Start with basics - Is there a God? Who is God? Who is Jesus & what did he do? What is prayer?
- Then get to Creed, sacraments, morality

Example:

1. God's existence
2. Science vs religion
3. Jesus & gospel (kerygma)
4. Prayer
5. Trinity
6. Creed
7. Sacraments
8. Holy spirit, sacrament of confirmation
9. Gifts & vocation
10. Life in Christ/morality/Theology of the Body
11. Evangelization/witness

Recommended resources:

- Start with **kerygma** (created for relationship, sin, cross & redemption, life in Christ) - like *Alpha* youth course - then finish up with **catechesis** like:
 - *Chosen* from Ascension Press
 - *One Eight* - Life Teen