

Preparation for Confirmation

Confirmation is the right of every baptized person. As a Sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation is intimately related to Baptism and the Eucharist. It renews and strengthens the Christian's baptismal commitment to bear witness to Christ before the world and to work eagerly for the building up of the "Body of Christ" in this world.

Requirements for a Child Candidate for Confirmation (Canon 889 # 2; 890)

The Candidate:

- is baptized,
- is in the 7th to the 9th grade
(According to the N.Y. Archdiocesan norm, the child must be in the 7th to 9th grade of school, but also according to N.Y. Archdiocesan norm, the child must have completed the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines for 7th and 8th grades),
- has been suitably instructed,
- gives sufficient evidence of readiness,
- gives indication of a proper disposition,
- participates actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church,
- completes the parish preparation for the reception of the sacrament,
- demonstrates an adequate grasp of the content of the Catholic faith according to the age level of the candidate,
- demonstrates an understanding that the commitment inherent in choosing to receive the Sacrament involves a way of life based on the values and morality of the Catholic Church,
- understands that faith-development is an ongoing process and is furthered by participation in the life of the parish through comprehensive youth ministry and ongoing adult faith formation.

It must always be remembered that it is the grace of the Sacrament which enables the person to mature as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The Role of the Parents of the Child to be Confirmed

The Church calls upon the parents to:

- Serve as models and teachers for their son or daughter by growing in their own personal relationship with God and living as committed Catholics, actively participating in the Sacraments and the life of the parish,
- Share their own faith with their son or daughter, both in word and in action, and thus form and develop a spirit of faith in the child with the help of the Religious Education Program and the Parish,
- Present their child for Confirmation instruction at the proper time (*Canon 890*),
- Attend parent programs conducted to deepen their awareness of the meaning of Confirmation for Christian living, and to assist them as they help their son or daughter to come to freely request the Sacrament,
- Participate with their son or daughter in the special liturgies and events of the preparation program,
- Assist and encourage their son or daughter to understand and assimilate what is being presented during the preparation period,
- Encourage their newly-confirmed son or daughter to continue to be actively involved in the Church, especially in their own parish.

Requirements for the Sponsor of the Child to be Confirmed

(GDC 9; Canons 874, 892, 893, 894)

There is one sponsor for the person being confirmed. The sponsor represents the faith community, guides the confirmed person in acting as a true witness to Christ, and oversees the confirmand's faithful fulfillment of the obligations connected with this Sacrament.

The sponsor:

is, when possible and beneficial, the baptismal godparent because the responsibilities undertaken by the sponsor at Confirmation are a continuation and development of the godparent's promises made at the candidate's Baptism,

If the sponsor cannot, or should not, be the baptismal godparent, the choice of sponsor is made according to the following requirements. The sponsor:

- must be designated by the one being confirmed, by the parents, or in their absence, by the Pastor,
- must have completed his/her 14th year of life,
(Canon Law suggests age 16 but defers to the Bishop of the Diocese. New York allows 14 years of age.)
- need not be of the same gender as the candidate,
- must not be the father or mother of the person to be confirmed,
- should be sufficiently mature in his/her faith commitment and be actively expressing it in daily living,
- must be fully initiated into the Catholic Church, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and be a participating member of his/her parish,
- participates as requested in preparation program and is present at Confirmation.

The role of the sponsor is to:

- help the candidate grow in a faith-relationship with Jesus by sharing faith with the candidate and by modeling the life of the mature Catholic,
- assist and encourage the candidate in the study and practice of the Catholic faith.

Immediate Preparation for Confirmation

Develop an immediate preparation program outside the regular Religious Education Program. The immediate preparation program may include:

- parent involvement: take great care to instruct the families of those preparing to receive Confirmation on the true nature of the Sacrament,
- letter of request to Bishop or Pastor,
- interview of each candidate for Confirmation by the Pastor or Pastor-delegate,
- a day or evening of prayer (see in this section *Administrative Aspects of Preparation for Confirmation: Organizing the Day/Evening of Prayer*),
- the requirement for service: if this is included in the immediate preparation, it should be for the purpose of teaching the candidates that service is an indispensable and lifelong obligation for the Christian life into which the candidate is being “confirmed”.

Inform Catechists, candidates, and families that the Baptismal name may be used for the Confirmation name if it is the name of a saint.

- In Baptism, the Christian receives his name in the Church. This should be the name of a saint who provides a model of charity and who is then looked upon as an intercessor in heaven. The baptismal name can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue (*Catechism of Catholic Church 2156*).
- The name received at Baptism is a name for eternity (*CCC 2159*). No new saint name need be taken at Confirmation. However, if a name other than a saint name was given at Baptism, a Confirmation name may be chosen.

Administrative Aspects of Preparation for Confirmation

- Ensure that, immediately prior to the year in which Confirmation is to be received, the child/youth has at least completed one year in the regular Religious Education Program and is in the second consecutive year.
- During the celebration of the Sacrament, stoles are not to be worn by the Confirmation candidates. The stole is the symbol of Ordination to the Priesthood not of the Sacrament of Confirmation. (*Archdiocesan Liturgical Office*)
- Insure that, immediately following the reception of Confirmation, the person's name and the date of Confirmation are recorded:
 - o on the child's permanent record card,
 - o in the parish Confirmation registry,
 - o in the parish Baptismal registry (*Canon 535*).
- Send a notice of Confirmation to the church of Baptism for each person baptized in another parish.
- Consider the following in organizing a day/evening of prayer:
 - o Overnight events are not recommended for junior-high-aged youth.
 - o Several adult chaperones in addition to the Catechists and Director should be present throughout the entire experience.
 - o If the day of prayer is to be scheduled for a school day, the Religious Education Director negotiates the date with the public school principal early in the year to avoid conflict with important school activities. (In some school districts, participating in the day of prayer could prevent a student from earning perfect attendance.)
 - o At the time of the event, the school principal should be given the names of participating students.
 - o Prior to the event, the students should notify the appropriate teachers of their pending absence.