

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . .

ACTS 2: 4a

CONFIRMATION: YOUTH AND ADULT

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CONFIRMATION: YOUTH AND ADULT

For Individuals Baptized Catholic

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sacraments of Initiation –Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist- are intimately bound together and form a single initiation by which persons enter into the life of faith and more fully realize their role in the mission and ministry of the Church. While the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is normative and serves as a model for all sacramental preparation, the pastoral reality is that for those faithful who were baptized as infants, Confirmation often marks the completion of their initiation into the Body of Christ.

The sacrament of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the candidate to strengthen their baptismal vocation and to awaken the gifts necessary for active participation in the life of the Church. In the scriptures, the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the apostles the gift of courage: to tell the Good News, to share the faith, to boldly proclaim the “mighty deeds of God who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9) It is imperative that every disciple seek out the gifts of the Spirit offered gratuitously through the sacrament of Confirmation.

II. CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION

CF 1. Adults and adolescents who were baptized into the Catholic Church as infants, and who have been adequately prepared, are to be at least in the eleventh grade or sixteen years of age at the time they celebrate the sacrament (see *CIC*, c. 891).

- 1.a. Adequate preparation, or proper disposition, for the sacrament is determined by the appointed pastoral leader, in consultation with the confirmation coordinator, at the completion of the preparation program (see *CIC*, c. 890).
- 1.b. The sacrament may be delayed until the appointed pastoral leader determines readiness of the individual (see *CIC*, c. 891).

CF 2. For pastoral reasons, an individual may be confirmed at a younger age if he/she has the use of reason, is sufficiently instructed, properly disposed, and is able to renew their baptismal promises (see *CIC*, c. 889 §2).

- 2.a. In this case, the candidate must write a letter to the Archbishop stating their desire to be confirmed.
- 2.b. The appointed pastoral leader must also write a letter to the Archbishop giving his/her assessment of the candidate.
- CF 3. The following are to be prepared for Confirmation within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA):**
- **Anyone who is not baptized and is at least of catechetical age;**
 - **Anyone who is a baptized Christian seeking full communion with the Catholic Church;**
 - **Anyone who was baptized Catholic but raised in another faith or with no faith.**
- CF 4. If a member of an Eastern Catholic Church requests the sacrament of Confirmation from a Latin Rite parish, the Liturgy Office is to be consulted to ensure the appropriate procedures.**
- CF 5. Candidates for confirmation must approach the sacrament of their own free will. If a parent or other person were to coerce or force a candidate into the celebration of the sacrament, it would be considered invalid.**

III. CATECHETICAL PREPARATION

- CF 6. Each parish and faith community is to provide for adequate preparation for Confirmation of its members.**
- 6.a. Candidates are to be prepared for confirmation in the parish or faith community in which they are members. If, for serious reasons, a candidate cannot participate in the preparation process of their own parish they are to request assistance from the confirmation coordinator and appointed pastoral leader for finding alternatives.
- 6.b. Preparation for Confirmation of adults, including young adults, is separate and distinct from preparation of youth. Pastoral judgment is to be made given the life circumstances, development and motivation when choosing which program to recommend for the individual.
- 6.c. Preparation of adults for Confirmation is to be an integral part of a comprehensive young adult ministry initiative, and/or other adult faith formation opportunities, under the

direction of a Pastoral Assistant for Young Adult Ministry/Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation, or similar coordinator of adult catechetical ministries (see *Sons and Daughters of the Light*).

- CF 7. Catholic high schools do not offer preparation programs for confirmation, and are to actively invite eligible students to seek Confirmation in their own parishes (see CSD, 2.1 [B]).**
- CF 8. Parishes are to assist parents in their role as primary catechist of their children by offering appropriate and concurrent faith formation opportunities for the parents of youth preparing for Confirmation (see Parish Faith Formation Policies: FF, III, “Pastoral Rights and Responsibilities”).**
- CF 9. The process of preparation is to be modeled after the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (see *GDC*, 59).**

Pastors are encouraged to collaborate with youth ministers and liturgical experts to fashion public and communal rituals appropriate to accomplish a process that is modeled on the RCIA.
- CF 10. Parishes are to consult the Archdiocese for the recommendation and/or approval of catechetical resources used in Confirmation preparation. (Contact the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry)**
- CF 11. Retreat opportunities offered as part of the immediate preparation are to be specific to confirmation preparation. Parishes are to provide these opportunities, or are to participate in regional or archdiocesan retreats designed for this purpose.**
- CF 12. Service experiences are to be parish based, and consist of both individual and gathered opportunities. As formation in Christian service, these experiences should consist of direct service to, and advocacy for, the poor and marginalized in the candidates’ community.**
- CF 13. Lack of a candidate’s participation in a specific service experience or retreat shall not be used as the sole basis for denial or delay of the sacrament.**

IV. TIME OF CELEBRATION

CF 14. Confirmation should take place during the normal Sunday Eucharist celebrated by the parish or faith community of the candidate.

- 14.a. For practical and pastoral reasons, including the availability of the Archbishop or his delegate, confirmation may be celebrated during the celebration of the Eucharist at another time.
- 14.b. Confirmation may not be celebrated during Lent. Nor is it appropriate for confirmation to take place for these candidates during the Easter Vigil, which is reserved for those preparing for full initiation through the RCIA.
- 14.c. Depending on circumstances or the pastoral needs of the community, confirmation may be celebrated every year or every other year.

CF 15. Permission of the Archbishop is required to celebrate Confirmation outside the celebration of the Eucharist.

CF 16. Scheduling Confirmation is to be done in consultation with the Archbishop's Office. The Archbishop's Office initiates this consultation through a letter that is sent out in the fall asking parishes/regions to submit requested dates for Confirmation.

V. SPONSORS

CF 17. Sponsors serve as ministers representing the faith community into which the candidate is being initiated.

- 17.a. Candidates select their sponsors in consultation with the confirmation coordinator, and, in the case of youth candidates, their parents. The selection of sponsors is to be based on appropriate lifestyle, participation in the Catholic faith, and the ability to provide the nurturing supportive role expected of a sponsor.
- 17.b. It is recommended that one of the baptismal sponsors (godparents) serve as the Confirmation sponsor, if they still meet the other requirements and expectations for the role.

17.c. Parishes and faith communities are to provide formation for sponsors which helps them to understand the permanent nature of their role, includes participation in adult faith formation programs, helps them to know what and how to discuss faith with their candidate, as well as answer questions their candidates may ask.

17.d. As witness to the public and permanent relationship they enter into with the candidate, it is recommended that parishes provide opportunities for sponsors and candidates to participate in the preparation process together in some way.

CF 18. The sponsor must be a fully initiated Catholic, having been baptized, confirmed, and received their first Eucharist, who leads a life in keeping with the role to be taken on (see *CIC*, c. 874 §1, 1°-5°). The full initiation of the sponsor is to be verified.

Verification of full initiation is to be provided by the proposed sponsor to the parish, by means of a recently issued baptismal certificate with notations, or a credible witness.

CF 19. The sponsor is to be at least 16 years of age and sufficiently mature for the role.

CF 20. The sponsor must be free to celebrate the sacraments and not bound by any canonical penalty.

CF 21. A parent or legal guardian may not serve as sponsor for his/her child.

It is generally not advisable for a spouse, fiancée, boyfriend, or girlfriend, to serve as sponsor.

CF 22. If the sponsor is unable to participate in the celebration of confirmation, a proxy may be designated.

The proxy must fulfill the same requirements as the sponsor. The absence of the sponsor during the celebration of confirmation does not invalidate the sacrament (see *CIC*, c. 892).

VI. CONFIRMATION NAME

CF 23. Candidates are to be confirmed with their baptismal name, as witness to the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation.

23.a. Candidates are strongly encouraged to select a person from the canon of saints and ‘blessed’ of the Church to study and emulate as a patron of their confirmation. Alternatively, the patron may be chosen from the canon of any of the Christian Churches of the East.

- 23.b. If a candidate chooses, they may be confirmed with both their baptismal name and the name of their patron.

VII. MINISTERS OF CONFIRMATION

CF 24. The Archbishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation and may grant delegation to his auxiliary bishops (see *CIC*, c. 882).

- 24.a. By law and by mandate of the Archbishop, pastors possess the faculty of administering Confirmation when they baptize one who is no longer an infant or when they admit one who is already baptized into the full communion with the Catholic Church (see *CIC*, c. 883, 2°).

- 24.b. If necessary, the Archbishop may also grant a presbyter the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics who desire the sacrament (see *CIC*, c. 884 §1). This faculty is requested by the appointed pastoral leader in writing and includes the names of the individuals involved, the circumstances surrounding the request, and the date and place. Delegation of faculty is granted in writing for each case. The delegation is to be noted in the Confirmation register. Unless the faculty is explicitly granted to a presbyter, no Confirmation may take place.

CF 25. If the Archbishop or his delegate fails to show up, the appointed pastoral leader is to make assiduous effort to contact the minister in question to determine whether faculties may be granted to the pastor or another presbyter.

CF 26. Any presbyter may confirm a baptized person who is in danger of death (see *CIC*, c. 883 3°). If possible, there should be some spiritual preparation beforehand, suited to the particular situation.

VIII. PLACE OF CONFIRMATION

CF 27. Confirmation is to be celebrated in the parish church of the candidate, as the normal place of liturgies celebrated by the parish or faith community (see *CIC*, c. 881).

- 27.a. In some instances it may be preferable to schedule a regional celebration for the sacrament of confirmation, where several parishes may celebrate together in one location.

27.b. If, for serious reasons, candidates are unable to participate in their parish celebration of confirmation, they are to request the assistance of the confirmation coordinator and appointed pastoral leader in finding another parish celebration they may attend.

CF 28. Permission of the Archbishop is required for a parish or regional celebration to occur in a location other than a church.

IX. LITURGICAL RITES

CF 29. The archdiocesan Liturgy Office will assist local parishes in planning the celebration of Confirmation. Since the Archbishop or one of his delegates is the presider, the archdiocesan Liturgy Office will provide final approval on all liturgical planning.

X. DOCUMENTATION AND PARISH REGISTERS

CF 30. Registration of the conferral of Confirmation is to take place in accord with the requirements of *CIC*, c. 895 and the sacramental records policy of the Archdiocese of Seattle regardless of immigration or legal standing of the candidate or their family. Notification of the conferral of Confirmation must be sent to the church of baptism (see Sacramental Records Policies: SR, V, “Confirmation”).