

# Adolescent Confirmation Preparation

## BEST PRACTICES

### Have you been called to help prepare young people for Confirmation?

If so, chances are you're always looking for ways to make your session, activities and experiences more meaningful and responsive to the needs of the young people you are ministering to.

The Archdiocese of Seattle has been studying the adolescent Confirmation protocols of U.S. Archdioceses to identify best practices as part of *Preparing Catholic Young People for Confirmation: A Parish Source Book* to be completed in 2010.

The research conducted as part of this effort identified seven essential components and supporting best practices to guide parishes in designing and facilitating an adolescent Confirmation preparation journey. While these components and best practices are not all inclusive, they do offer a helpful framework adaptable to a variety of parish settings. The expectation is parishes will incorporate as many of these as possible—identifying and sharing future *best practices* to update the resource.

#### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

1. Theologically Sound
2. Models the Baptismal Catechumenate
3. Affirms Catholic Identity
4. Invites, Welcomes and Forms
5. Builds Relationship
6. Celebrated as a Parish Liturgy
7. Supports the Newly Confirmed

A single best practice may support more than one component—with each identified practice having been found to be especially meaningful when ministering to young people.

Several of the best practices supporting Component #4 (Invites, Welcomes, Forms) are highlighted in the following checklist. Use it to inventory the practices which currently support your parish adolescent Confirmation journey—or those you would like to incorporate going forward!

#### INVITES

Pastors (or their designee) call and/or visit the parents of young people primarily ages 13-16 to personally invite them to prepare for Confirmation.

Parish annually reviews baptismal records and creates a database to track and notify parents of all baptized young people primarily ages 13 to 16.

#### WELCOMES

Parent/Candidate Orientation

Parent/Candidate Welcoming and Listening Session

Candidate Promise Ritual at Parish Liturgy

Regular communication (email, letter, bulletin, etc.) with parents and candidates to encourage weekly worship, family and personal prayer and Catholic Christian practices

#### FORMS

Parish adolescent Confirmation model forms young people as faithful disciples, grateful stewards and active evangelists

Sessions, activities and experiences use scripture, simple stories, art, symbols and objects

Sessions, activities and experiences support six tasks of catechesis, Archdiocesan Learner Outcomes and build Catholic identity

Sessions, activities and experiences affirm personal giftedness and help young people embrace a genuinely Christian life

Sessions, activities and experiences are developed using a Shared Christian Praxis to assess effectiveness

Sessions, activities and experiences emphasize *doing in* imitation of Christ teaching the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and Catholic Social Tradition

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## FORMS, cont.

Service takes young people beyond their immediate setting connecting them with impressive Christian people and organizations

Opportunities for candidates to share a meal together

Service outreach includes prayer and reflection

Sessions, activities and experiences connect Baptism and Eucharist with Confirmation and explain full Christian initiation **and highlight elements and actions of Confirmation Rite**

Candidate Covenant Ritual at Parish Liturgy

Sponsor orientation, welcome and blessing

Sessions, activities and experiences for both sponsors and candidates

Candidates attend at least one retreat

Reconciliation celebrated

Affirmation Ritual at Parish Liturgy

Candidates, parents and sponsors invited to attend Chrism Liturgy

Process for determining readiness emphasizes candidate's choice

Closure Interview

Prayerful rehearsal for candidates and sponsors

## ADOLESCENT CONFIRMATION: A VISION

Confirmation marks a unique moment in a person's life when one is invited to grow in faith and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, embrace a *new maturity* where all that has gone before takes on richer and deeper meaning further forming one as a faithful disciple, grateful steward, and active evangelist of the *Risen* Christ.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. We regularly and personally invite and welcome all baptized Catholic young people to begin preparing for Confirmation.
2. We faithfully prepare young people to *See, Celebrate, and Live* life as Catholics.
3. We accompany young people and their parents on their spiritual journey—marking a clear path uniting Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
4. We model for young people the lifelong faith practices of worship, prayer, study, stewardship and moral decision-making.
5. We regularly identify and evaluate best practices and resources to enrich the Confirmation preparation experience.
6. We take our cue from the Baptismal Catechumenate emphasizing relationships, rituals and worship and the involvement of the full faith community.
7. We value our Confirmation ministers and leaders and provide them with the formation, resources and support they need.

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**“Whatever we can do to enable young people to find and utilize their potential is a form of sacred activity.”**

*Reclaim the Fire* by Rev. Martin Pable

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