



Confirmation Guidelines for the Diocese of Boise



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Diocese of Boise

CONFIRMATION: YOUTH

For Individuals Baptized Catholic

INTRODUCTION

The Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—are intimately bound together and form a single initiation process by which persons enter into the life of faith and more fully realize their role in the missions and ministry of the Church.

Thus, the true preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation begins at one's baptism. Through Baptism, candidates are welcomed into the faith community and called to live as Christ's disciples according to the model of the Paschal Mystery. At the sacrament of Confirmation, young people have the opportunity to renew their baptismal vows and celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, who, as the Giver of Life, enables people to live faithful lives.

Confirmation is the celebration of each church community. Each parish develops its particular program to meet its candidates' needs, within diocesan guidelines.

Confirmation preparation invites the candidates to take a deeper look at their faith with other community members, both young and old. Candidates learn how they make a difference in the world as members of the Catholic Church.

When choosing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, each candidate demonstrates a personal intention to live as a Catholic according to his or her baptismal vows. Confirmation celebrates the choice of each candidate to continue the journey of faith that never ends. God is eternal and so is faith. God offers all believers the gift of faith to be Christ's disciples, and Confirmation preparation invites the candidates to accept God's gift.

Through relationships of love, expectation, trust, and challenge, the parish community provides the participants in the Confirmation with many opportunities to grow in their Catholic faith and learn to live as disciples of Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit. Upon receiving the sacrament, the newly confirmed will be invited into fuller participation and mentored into greater responsibility for parish life and mission.

GUIDELINES

A. Candidates for Confirmation

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 grades 9 or 10 by the time they celebrate the sacrament. (see Diocesan Policies and Procedures)
2. 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)

3. The sacrament may be delayed until the appointed pastoral leader determines readiness of the individual. (see CIC, c. 891)
4. 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) In this case, the candidate must write a letter to the Bishop stating his/her desire to be confirmed. The appointed pastoral leader must also write a letter to the Bishop, giving his/her assessment of the candidate.
5. The following are to be prepared for Confirmation within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA):
 - a. Anyone who is not baptized and is at least of catechetical age;
 - b. Anyone who is a baptized Christian seeking full Communion with the Catholic Church;
 - c. Anyone who was baptized Catholic but raised in another faith or with no faith
6. Candidates for Confirmation must approach the sacrament of their own free will. If a parent or other person coerces or forces a candidate into the celebration of the sacrament, it will be considered invalid. (CCC1319; Guidelines for Confirmation-Seattle)
7. Candidates for Confirmation who have attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs. (CCC 1319)

B. Sponsors

1. Candidates select their sponsors in consultation with the Confirmation coordinator and 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. The sponsor may be male or female who has himself/herself been confirmed. A parent may not act as a sponsor but may "present" the child with another qualified person being the sponsor. (Canon 893 with reference to Canon 874, #5) The full initiation of the sponsor is to be verified by the proposed sponsor providing a recently issued baptismal certificate with notations, or a credible witness.
2. It is recommend that one of the baptismal sponsors (godparents) serve as the Confirmation sponsor, so as to emphasize the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. (Canon 893, #2)
3. Parishes and faith communities are to provide formation for sponsors which helps them to understand the permanent nature of their role. This including participation in adult faith formation, helps them to know what and how to discuss faith with their candidate, as well as answering questions their candidates may ask.
4. As witness to the public and permanent relationship sponsors 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. To facilitate these meetings, it is helpful if the sponsor is a local resident.
5. The sponsor is to be at least 16 years of age and sufficiently mature for the role.

6. The sponsor must be free to celebrate the sacraments, including reception of the Eucharist. The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic. This includes living in sacramental marriage and actively participating in parish life.
7. 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.
8. 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)

C. Ministers of Confirmation

1. The Bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. If necessary, the Bishop 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.
2. Any presbyter may confirm a baptized person who is in danger of death. (see CIC, c. 883 30)

D. Place of Confirmation

1. 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. For the Diocese of Boise regional celebrations for the sacrament are also scheduled.
2. If, for serious reasons, candidates are unable to participate in their regional celebration of Confirmation, they are to request the assistance of the Confirmation coordinator and appointed pastoral leader in finding another celebration they may attend.
3. Permission of the Bishop is required for a regional celebration to occur in a location other than a church.

E. Time of Celebration

1. Confirmation should take place during the normal Sunday Eucharist celebrated by the parish or faith community of the candidate.
2. For practical and pastoral reasons, including the availability of the Bishop, Confirmation may be celebrated during the celebration of the Eucharist at another time.
3. The scheduling of dates for Confirmation is initiated by the Bishop's Office through a letter that requests parishes/regions to submit requested dates for Confirmation.

F. Names

The use of the baptismal name on the occasion of Confirmation better expresses the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. If a new name is taken, it should be the name of a recognized saint. Candidates should be guided in choosing a name.

G. Photographs

1. Photographs by one professional photographer may be taken during Mass. No one should leave his/her seat to do so. Please inform the Confirmation candidates and sponsors of this at the time of the rehearsal.
2. The Bishop will be happy to have his picture taken with the individual candidates and sponsors/family members, etc. after the Confirmation Mass.
3. Group photos, if necessary, should be taken 15-20 minutes prior to the ceremony, in the Church or place of assembly of the candidates. The Bishop will vest to join the candidates.

H. Knights of Columbus

The honor guard of the Knights of Columbus are welcome to participate in the procession and recession. They should be seated in the back, so as not to obstruct the participation of the candidates and sponsors. In the procession, they follow the cross-bearer and acolytes, and precede the concelebrants both in and out of the Church.

I. Liturgical Rites

See diocesan packet for Confirmation.

J. Documentation and Parish Registers

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 Diocese of Boise, 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. If the parish address is not available, notification may be sent to the appropriate diocese.

CATECHETICAL PREPARATION

A. Overview

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit, his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of candidates. (CCC1309)

Parishes should present catechesis for the Sacrament of Confirmation that

- Teaches that Confirmation increases and deepens the grace of Baptism, imprinting an indelible character on the soul
- Teaches that Confirmation strengthens the baptismal conferral of the Holy Spirit on those confirmed in order to incorporate them more firmly in Christ, strengthen their bond with the Church, associate them more closely with the Church's mission, increase in them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and help them bear witness to the Christian faith in words and deeds
- Teaches about the role of the Holy Spirit, his gifts and his fruits

- Is developmentally appropriate and includes retreat experiences
- Includes instruction on the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism and the words of the sacramental formula
- Ensures that parents and sponsors are involved in the catechetical preparation of the 'children' for Confirmation
- Teaches that the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. (NCD 36:2)

B. Preparation

Each parish and faith community is to provide for adequate preparation for Confirmation for its members.

1. Candidates are to be prepared for Confirmation in the parish, mission or station 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 the appointed pastoral leader for finding alternatives. Candidates need a supportive letter from their pastor and Confirmation Director in order to participate in another parish's preparation time.
2. 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.
3. The minimum length of time to prepare for the reception of Confirmation is about six months. This assumes that the candidates already have a basic foundation in their faith and are practicing Catholics. A two year remote preparation may be necessary in some cases.
4. It is expected that Religious Formation offered in Parochial Schools will contribute to the readiness of confirmation candidates. Schools will actively invite eligible students to seek preparation in their own parishes.
5. Confirmation Preparation should provide an opportunity to partner with families as communities of faith. (See Appendix One: Key four, pg. 23). 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.
6. All children, even those who are "home schooled," must be in a parish program for sacramental preparation. (Policies and Practices: The Sanctifying Office of the Church. Book IV, pg. 33.)
7. The process of preparation is to be modeled after the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. (GDC, 59) Pastors are encouraged to collaborate with youth ministers and liturgical experts to fashion public and communal rituals appropriate to accomplish this.
8. Parishes are to consult the Diocese for the recommendation and/or approval of catechetical resources used in Confirmation preparation.
9. Retreat opportunities offered as part of the immediate preparation are to be specific to Confirmation preparation.
10. 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. Prayer and reflection time are a necessary component of these experiences.

11. 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.

C. Elements of the Confirmation process

1. Request to receive the Sacrament
 - a. Personal interview to determine readiness
 - b. Parental involvement
 - c. Choosing a sponsor

2. Immediate preparation time involves a variety of methods to ensure candidates understand the reality of the Sacrament and its effects. (see B 1,2,3 and 5) This is not a time to teach all the aspects of the Catholic faith. Persons needing this kind of formation, as determined in part by the initial interview, should be provided with a way to meet their needs. Required topics to be covered for Confirmation include:
 - a. Sacraments of Initiation (Confirmation is a beginning, not an end. It is not choosing to be Catholic but being ready to receive the gift of the Spirit in order to live the Catholic faith more fully.)
 - b. The Creed
 - c. History of Confirmation
 - d. Sacrament of the Holy Spirit
 - e. Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - f. Confirmation: Christian Witness in parish and world
 - g. Rite and Symbols

3. Conversion opportunities provide the candidates with a way to meet Jesus and to choose to live their lives according to the Catholic faith.
 - a. Prayer experiences, especially those centered on the Gospels
 - b. Retreat experiences (ICYC is a possibility with Confirmation specific follow up)
 - c. Sacrament of Penance
 - d. Service to others, both inside and outside of the parish setting, give the candidates opportunities to reach out with their gifts to serve those in need. The number of hours is not as important as the need to plan the activities and to reflect on the experience.

4. Letter to the Bishop
 - a. Name, parish
 - b. Brief biography
 - c. What I believe about the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - d. Why I want to receive this Sacrament
 - e. What do I want the Bishop to pray for, for me

5. Sponsors
 - a. Attend some sessions/retreats with their candidates
 - b. Meet at least monthly with candidates to answer questions, work on service projects or other activities that give the candidates an experience of an adult living their faith.

6. Parents participate in the Confirmation process. Activities may include
 - a. Prayer
 - b. Give input to initial request, either in writing or at a gathering
 - b. Assist with sessions or retreats

- c. Participate in rites
7. The parish community participates in the process by
 - a. Prayer
 - b. Their example as adult Catholics living their faith
 - c. Volunteering to be part of the process
 - d. Welcoming youth and young adults at parish gatherings
 8. Possible rites modeled after RCIA
 - a. A public calling to the Confirmation process
 - b. A blessing after retreat time

RESOURCES

1. An Integrated Vision of Confirmation Preparation—Appendix 1
2. Diocesan List of Approved Texts—Appendix 2
3. Confirmation Survey Summary—Appendix 3
4. Supplementary recommended resources

Websites:

Liturgy of the Hours Apostolate	www.liturgyhours.org
National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry	www.nfcym.org
Saint Mary's Press	www.smp.org
American Catholic	www.americancatholic.org
Catholic Answers	www.catholic.com
Catholic Online	www.catholic.org
The Word Among Us	www.wau.org
National Catholic Reporter	www.ncronline.org
Catholic Web	www.catholicweb.com
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops	www.usccb.org
Center for Ministry Development	www.cmdnet.org
Diocese of Fairbanks	www.cbna.info
Diocese of Juneau	www.dioceseofjuneau.org
Archdiocese of Los Angeles	www.archdiocese.la

5. Resource Center

Videos

We have several series on the sacraments, each of which includes a segment on Confirmation. We also have many biographies of saints. Other videos include

Spirit Alive in Community	PRO 075
Confirmation	PRO 077
Confirmed in a Faithful Community (Meant for leaders, sponsors, catechists)	SAC 4 V701
Sponsor's Video	SAC 4 V701

DVD

What Catholics Believe about Confirmation	SAC 4 112 DVD
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Programs

Confirmation: Be Sealed Pauline Books and Media

Catholic Update has good, 4 page references on almost any topic. See your RCIA director or contact the Resource Center



Appendix 1

An Integrated Vision of Confirmation Preparation



An Integrated Vision of Confirmation Preparation

Initiating members into a community is a defining moment: we take time to consider who we are, what we do and how we celebrate as we invite others to join us. The sacrament of Confirmation is an opportunity for reflection and renewal for a parish community. Considering the energy and commitment that many communities put into their Confirmation preparation programs, it is reasonable that we should have high hopes for the outcomes: renewed communities of faith, strengthened families and young disciples ready and anxious for participation in the actions and worship life of their faith communities. In addition to these outcomes, everyone involved wants something meaningful, manageable and real to their lives. Yet in many parishes the current situation reveals families who find the process demanding, leaders who find their role difficult and young people who, through the process, have exhausted their enthusiasm for belonging to the parish. Little wonder that the hopes of parishes for renewed communities, strengthened families and active young disciples are not realized.

Matching our hopes with a consistent pastoral practice requires unraveling the reasons for our current situation. Communities have often backed into practices that do not result in the outcomes desired because they are basing preparation programs on fears. We are afraid youth do not know their faith. We are afraid they will not show up voluntarily. We are afraid that we have not taught them all they need to know before they are out of our control.

An obvious reaction to these fears has been mandatory, all-inclusive programs that consume great amounts of energy. Confirmation preparation is harder than it needs to be when it becomes a way to create a mandatory youth ministry program or compulsory religious education. In addition to the frustration of teens, parents and leaders, the cost of this approach is that the energy used in these programs could be used to create or strengthen the overall ministry with youth. We are trying to provide for adequate preparation for the sacrament at the same time that we are trying to solve all of these fears and expectations. The job is just too big. Additional resources and people can make that big job easier but do not address the core issues:

- How do we as a community create active, engaging and comprehensive ministry with youth?
- How do we plan for systematic faith education for adolescents?
- How do we prepare youth for Confirmation in such a way that we honor the distinct gift of the sacrament?

Communities will find many different ways to answer these questions. For some parishes Confirmation programs are all encompassing and include all of the elements of ministry with youth. Other communities want comprehensive youth ministry with sacramental preparation as one component. These programs provide a variety of ministries to young people to serve their needs for faith formation. These choices reflect the personality, resources and history of a community. Each choice affects allocation of resources and energy. Parishes struggle when they expect to do it all: provide for an all encompassing Confirmation program as they continue to strive for comprehensive youth ministry.

This situation sets up competition. Elements of the same ministry vie for youth attention, family time and limited parish resources. Leaders implementing the programs can feel as though what they are doing is just too difficult. The important thing to consider is that the problem is structural; it is not a problem of personnel or a weakness in the community. It is not for lack of good intentions or creative leaders. It is simply that what we expect from our programs and our communities does not match with what these programs are able to deliver.

We Need a Focus

Confirmation preparation becomes a structural challenge when we combine our practice of sacramental preparation with all of our expectations for faith formation and youth ministry. When the Confirmation preparation program assumes all of the responsibility for meeting the expectations of our youth ministry and faith formation, the community's energy is tied up attempting to meet all of these expectations in *one* program. In effect, we tie ourselves in knots, unable to meet expectations let alone the needs of young people. These knots paralyze our effectiveness.

You know you are tied up in knots when...

- Preparing for Confirmation and youth ministry are so bound together that programs compete for parish resources, youths' time and family support.
- The Confirmation program and the RCIA process fight over the same weekend liturgy for space to include a liturgical rite.
- Preparing for Confirmation includes all of the expectations for an adolescent to learn and grow in faith, making Confirmation programs become the equivalent of studying for a faith "bar" exam.
- It is harder and harder each year to involve volunteers.
- It feels like the parish is fighting with families for quality time with their adolescents.
- Ministry with youth feels like you are pulling teeth because the young people just do not want to be there.

To loosen the ties that bind it is helpful to focus on the relationship between the following three elements:

- Understanding Confirmation
- Effective sacramental preparation
- Youth ministry before, during and after Confirmation

Focus One

Understanding Confirmation

Context for Confirmation

“People in love make signs of love, not only to express their love but also to deepen it.”¹ Sacraments are God’s signs of love expressed as gift. The sign of love we celebrate in Confirmation has a particular history. The external symbols of Christian initiation have their roots in the customs of second and third century Roman culture. Even the word sacrament has a relationship to the Roman ceremony called the *sacramentum* in which soldiers were initiated into the rights and responsibilities of service to the Roman citizenship. In the practice of the time, a bath was followed by rubbing oil into the body to strengthen the muscles and moisturize the skin. Hence, in the Christian tradition the water-bath of Baptism was complemented by a post-baptismal anointing which evolved into Confirmation.

As ministry changed with the expanding Church of the third and fourth century, the practice of initiation changed as well. In some countries, the water-bath of Baptism was performed by a local minister while the anointing was performed by the bishop. It was in this context that Confirmation as a separate sacrament began to evolve.² From these early roots, we can see the integral relationship of Confirmation to Baptism, the symbolism of strengthening and the relationship with the wider Church as symbolized by the bishop’s anointing.³

The roots of controversy and confusion around this sacrament are embedded in its history. In the years following the recognition of Confirmation as a distinct sacrament different interpretations have been prevalent. Does Confirmation ratify Baptism making it effective because the bishop has anointed? What is the meaning of Baptism? Is Baptism incomplete? Do we receive more of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation? How much is enough? Our understandings or misunderstandings of the sacrament have led to pastoral practices that are sometimes equally confusing.

Keys to Understanding Confirmation

Part of our difficulty in defining Confirmation is trying to name and quantify this grace and gift from God. As part of the mystery of God’s call to us, the sacraments have been entrusted to be witnessed to by the Church. While not claiming to exhaust the meaning or to answer every question, Church leadership provides clarity about the sacraments. From *the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, we can summarize four keys for understanding Confirmation.

Four Keys to Understanding Confirmation

Key One: Confirmation welcomes us as a sacrament of initiation.

- ✓ Confirmation is linked to Baptism and Eucharist.
- ✓ Confirmation is part of our initiation into the faith community.
- ✓ Confirmation honors the spiritual maturity of the individual.

Key Two: We are Confirmed in the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- ✓ Confirmation is part of the welcoming initiative of God the Father.
- ✓ Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
- ✓ Confirmation strengthens us with the Holy Spirit.

Key Three: Confirmation strengthens us for discipleship, mission and witness to our faith.

- ✓ Confirmation empowers us to witness to our faith.
- ✓ Confirmation links us to the ministry of Christ and the mission of the Church.
- ✓ Confirmation initiates young people into the adventure of discipleship.

- ✓ Preparation for Confirmation is a moment of conversion which includes celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Key Four: Confirmation is a celebration of the community of faith.

- ✓ Confirmation joins us to the ministering community.
- ✓ Confirmation is received by individuals and celebrated as community.
- ✓ Preparation awakens a sense of belonging to the universal Church and local parish.
- ✓ Preparation includes a sponsor who represents the wider faith community.
- ✓ Preparation provides an opportunity to partner with families as communities of faith.

Implications of the *Catechism's* Understanding

Key One: Confirmation welcomes us as a sacrament of initiation.⁴

- ◆ Confirmation is linked to Baptism and Eucharist.
- ◆ Confirmation is part of our initiation into the faith community.
- ◆ Confirmation honors the spiritual maturity of the individual.

A high moment in our celebration as Church occurs within the Easter Vigil when new members are welcomed into the community in the *Rite of Christian Initiation*. The sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, are received for the first time by catechumens who become full members of the faith community, celebrated in sign by water, oil and bread. These three sacraments join in a common purpose of welcoming, nourishing and initiating active discipleship. Confirmation is understood in this context. It is not separate from Baptism and Eucharist. It is an integral facet of this common moment that celebrates our belonging to the community that grows in faith, that gathers in worship, and that goes forth in mission.

Our preparation process should communicate the link between the sacraments of initiation at the same time that we consider the distinctive gift offered in Confirmation. We are challenged to remember and renew our Baptism and to live Eucharist more faithfully at the same time that we prepare for the gift of Confirmation.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- attends to an environment of hospitality
- includes reflection on Baptism and Eucharist
- provides for diverse starting points and individual needs

Key Two: We are Confirmed in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁵

- ◆ Confirmation is part of the welcoming initiative of God the Father.
- ◆ Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
- ◆ Confirmation strengthens us with the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we picture ourselves as seeking out and searching after God. Experience has been much more the opposite, God seeking us with the persistence of a loving parent. This “hound of heaven,” as C. S. Lewis described God, comes after us and continues to reveal more and more of God’s essence to us. Confirmation is part of this welcoming initiative and is deeply rooted in the Trinity: God revealed to us as Father, in Jesus as the Son, and in the continued presence of the Holy Spirit.

As we strive to prepare young people for Confirmation, we draw from young people their story of God's love and call; we join youth to the person, the presence and the ministry of Jesus; and we awaken within youth the Spirit among us.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples*...

- focuses on God's loving call
- promotes learning about and conversion toward a life in Christ
- initiates exploration of the Spirit in action today
- includes reflection on one's personal faith journey through journal and prayer opportunities

Key Three: Confirmation strengthens us for discipleship, mission and witness to our faith.⁶

- ◆ Confirmation empowers us to witness to our faith.
- ◆ Confirmation links us to the ministry of Christ and the mission of the Church.
- ◆ Confirmation initiates young people into the adventure of discipleship.
- ◆ Preparation for Confirmation is a moment of conversion which includes celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

"If I don't wash you," Jesus told him, "you don't really belong to me" (John 13:8). In the washing of the feet, Jesus makes tangible his powerful love for the disciples who are about to experience trial and challenge. Within this powerful act we find our call of what to do and who to be: servants; foot washers; ministers of healing; messengers of peace and love. We also find the assurance of Jesus' promise to continue to be with us. In the eye of the storm, in the midst of our struggle, our pain, our doubt, Jesus is there to nurture us and strengthen us for our ministry. He would not send us forth without giving us all that we need. In this shaping moment, described in the Gospel of John, we can understand more clearly the strengthening we receive in Confirmation. *It is a strengthening for mission received as part of God's promise to us.* Young people are hungry for all that this communicates: they are anxious to see the authentic witness of people who passionately believe and act on faith. They yearn for an adventure that is worthy of their idealism. As God strengthens young disciples, the faith community is continually challenged to lead faithful lives of witness and to give youth the opportunity to serve with us.

We prepare youth for lives of discipleship by our ministry of love and challenge. We help young people to live lives in a pattern of relying on God's strength and nourishment in times of trial as we join in mission together. We also help young people to name and claim the gifts they bring as young disciples.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- focuses on discipleship
- includes celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation
- provides follow-through resources that continue active discipleship

Key Four: Confirmation is a celebration of the community of faith.⁷

- ◆ Confirmation joins us to the ministering community.
- ◆ Confirmation is received by individuals and celebrated as community.
- ◆ Preparation awakens a sense of belonging to the universal Church and local parish.
- ◆ Preparation includes a sponsor who represents the wider faith community.
- ◆ Preparation provides an opportunity to partner with families as communities of faith.

As an athlete prepares for a coming event, a community of support gathers around. Some attend to the physical support providing special meals that nourish. Some attend to the discipline of the athlete calling her or him to continued practice and preparation. Others attend to the well-being of the person in heart and soul, providing words and acts of encouragement. Similarly, as we prepare for mission and ministry in the world, a community gathers around us. The community acts as witness and steward of the gifts of the newly confirmed disciples. In this moment of definition, as young people are welcomed into the community as fully initiated members, the community celebrates the meaning of their gathering. In many cultures, there is a ritual associated with a new year that includes cleaning the house, paying off debts and reconciling relationships. Similarly, newly confirmed young people present an opportunity for renewal in the faith community. Families are an important part of this renewal. Sacramental preparation is an opportunity to partner with families and to see the renewal of family life as a key opportunity. This is a time to “clean our house,” to remember who we are and whose we are; to celebrate in sacrament and in action our call to be God’s healing and loving presence to a world in need of a Word of love.

Confirmation preparation needs to involve the community and attend to the renewal of the faithful at the same time that we consciously make room for the gifts, the insights and the diversity of the newly confirmed members. We partner with families in preparing youth for Confirmation by respecting family life and by providing resources that allow preparation efforts to be an echo between home and Church. Confirmed youth stand with a sponsor who represents the community as guide and support.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples*....

- utilizes the resources of the community in preparing candidates
- includes worship resources to celebrate with the wider community
- includes resources that empower effective sponsors
- provides family resources that engage parental involvement
- provides follow-up resources that continue community involvement and ministry

Focus Two

Sacramental Preparation

All preparation efforts for the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, need to be informed and influenced by the principles of the *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*. This process, which is designed to initiate adults into full membership in the faith community, provides tremendous insight into the ways we structure Confirmation preparation. Among the directives found within Christian Initiation, principles for effective sacramental preparation can be gleaned.

Effective Sacramental Preparation....

- **attends to the individual faith journey.** Preparation for a sacrament is not about clock hours or the length and quantity of content. It is a conversion process.
- **links the liturgical year with sacramental preparation.** As “source and summit,” the public worship of the faith community in liturgy is an important time to acknowledge, celebrate and support candidates seeking sacramental preparation.
- **involves the faith community.** The community’s members should be seen as resource for the preparation and as the witnesses and stewards of candidates for sacramental preparation.⁸

Allowing Confirmation preparation to be nourished and informed by the principles that flow from Christian Initiation promotes effective programs and an integrated vision for sacraments. However, our pastoral practice suffers when we forget our audience. *When working with youth who are already baptized and receiving Eucharist, it is not necessary nor is it desirable to copy all of the elements of Christian Initiation.*

For example:

Youth who were baptized as infants and have been receiving Eucharist on a regular basis enter the Confirmation program. One week at Sunday liturgy they suddenly find themselves outside the church, knocking on the door requesting that the community let them in. What’s the message? “Last week before I entered into Confirmation preparation I was inside. This week I’m outside?”

This situation has occurred in parishes that have adopted the ritual of knocking at the door from the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. This is a well-intentioned attempt to communicate Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation. For youth, it is confusing and implies an incompleteness and deficiency in Baptism and Eucharist by sending initiated youth outside to request entrance. Ironically, when Confirmation is presented as something completely distinctive

from Baptism and Eucharist, we imply the same message: Baptism and Eucharist were for children, Confirmation is the mark of adult faith. Our task is to link Confirmation with the other two sacraments of initiation at the same time that we consider the potential for the distinctive gift of Confirmation.⁹

Defining precisely the relationship between the sacraments is a task that theologians and Church leaders have struggled with in relationship to the question of determining the optimum age for receiving the sacraments. For our purposes as youth ministers and religious educators, the challenge is to communicate the gift within the sacrament of Confirmation at the same time that we challenge candidates *to remember* Baptism in its fullness and to *live* Eucharist as the ever renewing sacrament and highest celebration of the faith community. This means that we allow the principles of the Christian initiation process to guide and shape our programs.

At the same time, we recognize the *distinct challenge* and opportunity of applying those principles as we prepare youth who are baptized and receive Eucharist to receive Confirmation. ***At its heart, Confirmation is further initiation into the adventure of discipleship.*** We invite youth to join us in the mission of Jesus to promote justice, service and healing. As disciples, youth are strengthened by Confirmation in a way that assists them in living out their baptismal calling and their life in Eucharist. Pope John Paul II describes this essence in explaining the sacrament: “The grace conferred by the Sacrament of Confirmation is more specifically a gift of Strength.”¹⁰

Moving Towards a Focused Preparation

If preparing for Confirmation is different from Christian initiation for adults, how should we prepare for the sacrament? Valuable norms for sacramental preparation are provided through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The yearly Lenten period is the model provided for immediate preparation of the sacrament.¹¹ Lent prepares all the baptized for the renewal of baptismal promises which is an important part of the Rite for Confirmation. As one guideline for preparation states:

In adapting these norms, it is essential to recognize that the candidates are baptized Catholics, celebrating Eucharist, and even if ‘partially initiated,’ are catechized and active in their faith life. Thus, there is no need to take extensive time with such candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation as with baptized, uncatechized, inactive Catholics who prepare for the sacraments through RCIA.¹²

How can programs respond to the diversity of youth?

Ministry with youth recognizes the paradox that while youth have a lot in common with each other, they are individuals with unique experiences, interests and circumstances. Serving youth as a community and as individuals can be a challenge for sacramental preparation. We recognize that an individual chooses and commits to be part of a faith community. The individual becomes lost when program expectations are unreasonable and participation is lock-step. This happens when the diversity of young people’s starting points, learning styles, and interests are sacrificed to the efficiency of a uniform program for adolescents. On the other hand it is nearly impossible to develop programs that are tailored to each individual young person and family. This is all part of that balancing act of remembering that communities are made up of individuals.

Responding to the needs of a community means keeping all of the needs in mind. If a parish implements solid faith formation opportunities for youth throughout the high school years, then the preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation can be focused and provide the accessibility and flexibility important to youth and families. In addition, a short-term program can emphasize conversion over content. Obviously the conversion process is enhanced through understanding of

the faith. Growing in faith is lifelong and continuous. Preparing for a sacrament becomes a critical moment for reflection, integration and celebration of the ways that God is working in our lives. If faith formation is available throughout the lifespan, the sacramental preparation process can pick up on a variety of starting points by building on strong faith understanding in some and initiating a hunger for further growth in others.

Some youth in our parishes may need to be guided towards experiences of Christian living prior to preparing for Confirmation. Parents, significant adults and parish leaders can all be a part of the process of spiritual direction — helping youth become active in youth ministry and take responsibility for their continued faith growth. Confirmation is an important part of the continued dialogue and journey of an adolescent who is growing as a young disciple; it is not a carrot to dangle at the end of this process. We can work pastorally with youth who have been away from faith formation and have fallen through the cracks. We should consider this opportunity as the exception, not the norm. To build programs for adolescents around the weakest participation of youth and families is to create continued failure. We build for success when we spend our energy developing the variety of experiences that help youth learn, grow and belong. We can only make such an investment when our Confirmation programs are focused and short-term and build towards adequate preparation for celebrating the sacrament.

What is “adequate preparation”?

The sacrament of Confirmation is part of God’s welcoming initiative. The sacrament can speak and be heard most clearly when the preparation focuses on receiving this gift. Understanding the context of this gift can help us to receive the gift more fully. We strive to learn the history of God’s initiative in the lives of God’s people and to know the ways of serving, acting and worshipping in the community gathered in God’s name. This knowledge and understanding in no way makes us qualified or deserving of the sacrament which is completely gift and grace. On the other hand, the gift is well received with understanding.

When the program becomes everything that youth “need” because we can require their participation in order to receive the sacrament, the “noble simplicity” of the sacrament can be diminished. Youth have been served poorly when our programs become overly filled with program events, attendance requirements and extensive check-lists. It is easy to lose site of the nature of the sacrament and the needs and gifts of the individual young person. ***Confirming Disciples proposes a focused, short-term preparation program that can be completed in four to six months and relies upon complementary youth ministry efforts prior to and after preparation for Confirmation.***

What do I tell people who think that six months is not enough?

Tell them they are right. Six months is not long enough to learn our faith. Two years is not enough. Perhaps a lifetime is just enough. ***Confirming Disciples*** is not all of the faith education needed by adolescents during these key years. Rather than putting everything needed into one sacramental preparation program, many parishes use a variety of strategies in forming faith for youth. In this way, youth can learn and grow in faith continuously throughout the high school years and be ready and anxious for continued faith formation as a young adult. Removing the extraordinary requirements for Confirmation makes it possible to provide targeted efforts for the differing needs, interests and maturity levels of youth. Parishes will respond with flexibility in different ways. Some parishes will encourage prior involvement in faith formation programs as a prerequisite to Confirmation preparation. Others will allow for youth to prepare for Confirmation when they feel called and ready. ***Confirming Disciples*** works well in either case.

The key is to make faith formation available to all youth in the parish, not just those preparing for Confirmation. The hoped for result is youth engaged in the community and involved in creative learning. As they learn and grow, youth will reach a point of reflection that allows them to respond with a chosen “Yes” to the invitation for Confirmation preparation. Ultimately, we want to place more emphasis in our preparation *on what God is doing* than on what we do. As Fr. Paul Turner states in reference to the question of teenagers’ readiness for Confirmation and accepting their faith for themselves: “Faith is a gift, the Holy Spirit is a gift, and sacraments celebrate the unmerited grace of God. Confirmation celebrates what God does, not what teens have shouldered.”¹³

Confirmation *preparation is nourished and informed by the directives of Christian Initiation.*

Effective Sacramental Preparation....

- attends to the individual faith journey of the adolescent
- links the liturgical year with the sacramental preparation process
- involves the faith community

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples....*

- provides a focused, short-term preparation process
- links the preparation process to the life and worship of the faith community
- promotes faith formation prior to and after Confirmation

Focus Three

Youth Ministry: Before, During and After Confirmation Preparation

A primary concern for many people involved with youth is how to keep youth in youth ministry after preparing for Confirmation. ***The best way for youth to continue involvement in youth ministry following Confirmation is if they experience participation in Confirmation as part of youth ministry all along.*** Ministry with youth needs to begin in the young adolescent years when there are many needs and opportunities for young people to be involved in Church. The structure of youth ministry and Confirmation is an important piece of the puzzle for making ministry efforts work. Many parishes find the most effective way to plan for success is to strive for a comprehensive youth ministry with a solid faith formation component. Within these efforts a focused, short-term Confirmation preparation is a time to solidify, reflect upon, and celebrate continued involvement in the ministry efforts of the parish.

The challenge of preparing youth for Confirmation is part of the larger challenge of the parish's mission and ministry with young people. A parish includes youth and families. As a community, we can cooperate with the actions of God in the life of a young person by providing critical opportunities for learning, reflection, prayer and action. These opportunities can form faith in the young person that will guide them into their young adult years. These opportunities can also renew the mission and ministries of the faith community because of the gifts and charisms of youth. Why not return to the notion of "required programs" in a new way? ***What would it be like if parishes were required to provide diverse opportunities for faith growth using all of the resources of the community?***

What if...

- ✓ Parishes make diverse learning experiences, growth opportunities, and service or leadership roles available to adolescents?
- ✓ Parishes take on the responsibility for working in partnership with parents by providing information, resources, care and respect?
- ✓ Parishes have a variety of paths in place to serve youth well, providing for growth, learning, service and worship in the adolescent years?

With all of this in place, a parish Confirmation preparation program would have a lot to rest on, and parishes could feel confident in providing a focused short-term program. Parishes would also be free to direct energy toward developing youth ministry.

Youth Ministry Convictions

A challenge in moving toward a more focused Confirmation preparation is the unevenness of youth ministry effectiveness within parishes. Many communities struggle to implement an approach that reflects the diversity and participation needed to serve young people. The challenge becomes the opportunity. If we move to preparing for the sacrament as a short-term process, the resources of the community can be directed towards creating youth ministry. The following convictions about youth ministry are based upon the real-life experiences of leaders in communities who have built effective and integrated youth ministry programs in diverse settings over the last twenty years.¹⁴

* Ministry with youth is comprehensive.

Youth ministry is not one program, one strategy or one leader. Youth ministry describes the Church's pastoral efforts with youth. Being comprehensive means we respond to the needs of diverse youth in a holistic way that integrates them into parish life.

* Ministry with youth recognizes that young people learn, experience faith and grow in faith in many ways.

Experience of the past two decades has proven that there are as many different ways to learn as there are different young people. This diversity can be something that overwhelms us or it can be an opportunity to be seized, giving us a variety of options to help youth and families grow in faith. We know as adults the times that a program that was supposed to help us learn did not connect for us. We may have even thought that the methods employed may work for someone else, but not for us. To serve diverse youth, we need diverse strategies: youth have different starting points and need a variety of ways to learn, grow, belong and contribute.

*** Ministry with youth includes faith formation.**

Faith formation is the heart of youth ministry. This formation encompasses the hopes of the community for evangelization, catechesis and religious education. Any approach which considers youth ministry as the community building partner with the other religious education aspects of a parish ministry misses this central core of all ministry efforts.

*** Ministry with youth is the responsibility of the community and draws young people into participation in the ministry efforts of the Church.**

Youth ministry is the way a community stands with, guides and comes to appreciate young people. It is not a particular leader's program and it is not something to keep separate or hidden. One of the greatest challenges of youth ministry is helping the parish family to become more youth-friendly, making room for the way that young people learn, pray, belong and share their gifts.

*** Ministry with youth respects and honors the role of parents in the faith development of young people.**

Among the insights gained from experience in youth ministry over the past two decades, one of the most important is the opportunity and the imperative to work in partnership with families. There was a time when some leaders in youth ministry defined their ministry as being a place for youth to get away from parents. There was almost an anti-parent feel to some early youth programming. Youth ministry has learned that parents are really part of the team — they are the youth ministers at home and they deserve to be treated with respect, hospitality and support.

Partnering with Parents

How do we support parents as they pass on faith and values in every aspect of family life? How do our programs support parents? These questions are very different from the one commonly asked: how can we get parents to support *our* programs? Family support is an important element in effective faith formation of youth. Youth who are preparing for Confirmation come to this experience with understandings about self, about service in the world and about leadership. Many of these understandings were formed in the home — the first-time experiences of learning about faith, about being in a community or of praying probably happened in the living room or the kitchen. To support parents in their critical role we need to keep families in mind as we plan and implement programs. To continue or strengthen the faith life of the home as “domestic church” we need to stand with families and provide them with resources for continued growth. The following guides help to promote a partnership with families.

*** Parents need to experience Church “on their side” through mutual understanding, respect and consideration.** Parents often experience Church as among those institutions families must compete with for time and energy. Families experience Church to be on their side when the practical realities of family life are considered in the implementation of programs intended to serve children and youth. This means we look carefully at requirements, schedules and our attitude of hospitality.

*** Parents can support something when they understand it and feel included.** Parents need information about the programs that involve their teens. They do not need to be inundated with information that goes beyond what they can use now. Outreach to parents which includes their concerns and aspirations paired with continued communication about programs and support needed will go a long way toward building partnership.

*** Parents can choose from a variety of resources and strategies to make their connection to a child's involvement.** Sometimes when the Church and community come to the realization

that family support is critical in youth activities, the response becomes an additional responsibility and burden to parents. For parents of adolescents, it is most helpful to select good **resources** from which parents can develop a strategy that works for their particular schedule, family system and style of parenting.

Effective Confirmation preparation of adolescents is situated within comprehensive youth ministry.

Youth Ministry Convictions

- Ministry with youth is comprehensive.
- Ministry with youth recognizes that young people learn, experience faith and grow in faith in many ways.
- Ministry with youth includes faith formation.
- Ministry with youth is the responsibility of the community and draws young people into participation in the ministry efforts of the Church.
- Ministry with youth respects and honors the role of parents in the faith development of young people.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples*...

- builds upon complementary youth ministry elements
- launches further development of youth ministry through a variety of resources
- includes family programming, communication tools and parent resources

Weaving It All Together

Reflecting about young people and Confirmation leads us to continue exploring ways to be clear and effective. To summarize these reflections, the following points guide leaders towards a distinctive emphasis within our Confirmation preparation:

Effective Confirmation Preparation

- emphasizes what God is doing in our lives
not what we do to be worthy or deserving
- works within youth ministry and faith formation
not as a separate or competing program
- focuses on preparation for celebrating the sacrament
not as a place for all of the needed adolescent catechesis
- involves the community of faith
not anonymous preparation programs
- works in partnership with parents
not in competition for family time and attention
- launches youth toward full participation and active discipleship
not as an end but a beginning

These reflections began with the image of communities that are tied up in knots over Confirmation preparation. The interesting thing about knots is that they keep things together in a way that is stuck in one place on the rope. On the other hand, a weave is a pattern that keeps the whole together and is open to include new threads. ***This is how we can situate Confirmation preparation: not as an event or a program of study, but as an insertion into the continued pattern of Christian living.*** We lead lives responding to God's call and being nurtured continuously by God's gentle pull and tug. Renewed insights about youth ministry, sacramental preparation and Confirmation will empower creative communities to weave together a preparation process that reflects the values, the charisms and the heart of the faith community. Such a tapestry will freely include the threads of newly confirmed youth who will bring new color and life.

Appendices for Section One

- Appendix 1: Summary of Key Principles
Appendix 2: Correlation of Confirmation Keys with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Appendix 3: Theological Commentary

For More Information about Youth Ministry

- East, Thomas, and John Roberto. *Access Guides to Youth Ministry: Leadership*. New Rochelle, NY: DBM, 1994. (available from the Center for Ministry Development)
- Roberto, John, et al. *Planning a Youth Ministry*. New Rochelle, NY: DBM, 1994. (available from the Center for Ministry Development)
- YouthWorks*. (2nd Edition) Center for Ministry Development. (Naugatuck, CT: Center for Ministry Development, 1996)

End Notes

¹ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship, Revised Edition* (Washington DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983) #4, page 9.

² Thomas Richstatter, O.F.M., *The Sacraments, How Catholics Pray* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1995), pages 32-33.

³ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1290, #1291, #1292.

⁴ *Ibid.*, #1285, #1308.

⁵ *Ibid.*, #1286, #1303, #1309.

⁶ *Ibid.*, #1287, #1302, #1303, #1309, #1310.

⁷ *Ibid.*, #1301, #1303, #1309, #1311. See also *Rite of Confirmation* II, #3 regarding the Role of Parents.

⁸ *Ibid.*, #1248. See also *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, #75.

⁹ This distinction is exemplified by the instruction within *The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* regarding Confirmation for baptized, yet uncatechized adults: “*But in the process of catechesis the priest, deacon, or catechist should take into account that these adults have a special status because they are already baptized.*” #402. See also: #400, 412.

¹⁰ *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 1992, page 3.

¹¹ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* #138.

¹² Archdiocese of Seattle, *Guidelines for Immediate Preparation for Confirmation*, (Seattle: WA: Archdiocese of Seattle, 1994) #18, page 6.

¹³ Rev. Paul Turner, Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions: *FDLC Newsletter* — December 1995, page 46.

¹⁴ See: John Roberto and Thomas East, *Access Guide to Youth Ministry: Leadership* (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Multimedia, 1993).

Appendix One

Summary of Principles

Key One: Confirmation **welcomes** us as a sacrament of initiation.

- Confirmation is linked to Baptism and Eucharist.
- Confirmation is part of our initiation into the faith community.
- Confirmation honors the spiritual maturity of the individual.

Key Two: We are Confirmed in **the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**

- Confirmation is part of the welcoming initiative of God the Father.
- Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
- Confirmation strengthens us with the Holy Spirit.

Key Three: Confirmation **strengthens us for discipleship**, mission and witness to our faith.

- Confirmation empowers us to witness to our faith.
- Confirmation links us to the ministry of Christ and the mission of the Church.
- Confirmation initiates young people into the adventure of discipleship.
- Preparation for Confirmation is a moment of conversion which includes celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Key Four: Confirmation is a **celebration of the community of faith.**

- Confirmation joins us to the ministering community.
- Confirmation is received by individuals and celebrated as community.
- Preparation awakens a sense of belonging to the universal Church and local parish.
- Preparation includes a sponsor who represents the wider faith community.
- Preparation provides an opportunity to partner with families as communities of faith.

Effective Sacramental Preparation

- Confirmation preparation is nourished and informed by the directives of Christian Initiation. Effective sacramental preparation:
 - attends to the individual faith journey of the adolescent
 - links the liturgical year with the preparation process
 - involves the faith community

Context for Confirmation: Comprehensive Youth Ministry

- Effective Confirmation preparation is situated within comprehensive youth ministry.
 - Ministry with youth is comprehensive.
 - Ministry with youth recognizes that young people learn, experience faith and grow in faith in many ways.
 - Ministry with youth includes faith formation and faith education.
 - Ministry with youth is the responsibility of the community and draws young people into participation in the ministry efforts of the Church.
 - Ministry with youth respects and honors the role of parents in the faith development of young people.

Appendix Two

Correlation of the Confirmation Keys with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Key One: Confirmation *welcomes* us as a Sacrament of Initiation.

- Confirmation is linked to Baptism and Eucharist.
- Confirmation is part of our initiation into the faith community.
- Confirmation honors the spiritual maturity of the individual.

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.

For, by the Sacrament of Confirmation, (the baptized) are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the “sacrament of Christian maturity,” we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need “ratification” to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of *Wisdom* says: “For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years.” Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood.

Implications

Our preparation process should communicate the link between the sacraments of initiation at the same time that we consider the distinctive gift offered in Confirmation. We are challenged to remember and renew our Baptism and to live Eucharist more faithfully at the same time that we prepare for the gift of Confirmation.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ attends to an environment of hospitality→ includes reflection on Baptism and Eucharist |
|---|

→ provides for diverse starting points and individual needs

Key Two: We are Confirmed in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

- Confirmation is part of the welcoming initiative of God the Father.
- Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
- Confirmation strengthens us with the Holy Spirit.

1286 In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission. The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his Baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit who the Father gives him ‘without measure.’

1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace: it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba, Father!” it unites us more firmly to Christ; it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us....

1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit — his actions, his gifts, and his biddings — in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life.

Implications

As we strive to prepare young people for Confirmation, we draw from young people their story of God’s love and call; we join youth to the person, the presence and the ministry of Jesus; and we awaken within youth the Spirit among us.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- focuses on God’s loving call
- promotes learning about and conversion toward a life in Christ
- initiates exploration of the Spirit in action today
- includes reflection on one’s personal faith journey through journal and prayer opportunities

Key Three: Confirmation strengthens us for discipleship, mission and witness to our faith.

- Confirmation empowers us to witness to our faith.
- Confirmation links us to the ministry of Christ and the mission of the Church.
- Confirmation initiates young people into the adventure of discipleship.
- Preparation for Confirmation is a moment of conversion which includes celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

- 1287** The Spirit is a gift given in fullness first to Jesus, the Messiah, yet meant to be communicated to “the whole messianic people.” On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit, a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim “the mighty works of God” ...those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 1302** It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.
- 1303** From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace: ...it renders our bond with the Church more perfect; it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses to Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:
Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God’s presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.
- 1309** Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit — his actions, his gifts, and his biddings — in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life.
- 1310** To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.

Implications

We prepare youth for lives of discipleship by our ministry of love and challenge. We help young people to live lives in a pattern of relying on God’s strength and nourishment in times of trial as we join in mission together. We also help young people to name and claim the gifts they bring as young disciples.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- focuses on discipleship
- includes celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation
- provides follow-through resources that continue active discipleship

Key Four: Confirmation is a celebration of the community of faith.

- Confirmation joins us to the ministering community.
- Confirmation is received by individuals and celebrated as community.
- Preparation awakens a sense of belonging to the universal Church and local parish.
- Preparation includes a sponsor who represents the wider faith community.
- Preparation provides an opportunity to partner with families as communities of faith.

1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of Confirmation signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all of the faithful.

1303 ...it renders our bond with the Church more perfect.

1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit — his actions, his gifts, and his biddings — in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.

Cross Reference in 1309 regarding the Role of Parents:

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is ordinarily the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually increase a spirit of faith in the children and, at times with the help of catechism classes, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist. The role of the parents is also expressed by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments. (*From the Introduction to the Rite of Confirmation, II, # 3*)

1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.

Implications

Confirmation preparation needs to involve the community and attend to the renewal of the faithful at the same time that we consciously make room for the gifts, the insights and the diversity of the newly confirmed members. We partner with families in preparing youth for Confirmation by respecting family life and providing resources that allow preparation efforts to be an echo between home and Church. Confirmed youth stand with a sponsor who represents the community as guide and support.

Therefore, *Confirming Disciples...*

- utilizes the resources of the community in preparing candidates
- includes worship resources to celebrate with the community
- includes resources that empower effective sponsors
- provides family resources that engage parental involvement
- provides follow-up resources that continue community involvement and ministry

Appendix 2

Approved Textbooks for use in the Diocese of Boise



MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests, Deacons, Principals, Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders

FROM: Most Reverend Michael P. Driscoll, MSW, DD, Bishop of Boise

DATE: February 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Approved textbooks for use in the Diocese of Boise

Catechetical ministry involves families, parish communities and catechists in presenting the teachings of Jesus and the church in a complete and authentic manner. Catechetical textbooks and teachers' manuals are important in this process.

The bishops' Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism reviews catechetical textbooks and publishes a list of those that have been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This Committee is a resource to assure that religion texts are doctrinally authentic and complete.

Many diocesan offices have committees that study materials from a pedagogical and methodological point of view. It is important that programs are properly sequenced and present essential truths in an understandable manner corresponding to the stage of the students' development. The process in the lessons should reflect good and various methodologies, cultural diversity and adequately present the church's teachings on social justice. Teachers' manuals should give assistance to the catechist and resources for family and parish.

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism has found the following materials to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Department of Parish Life and Faith Formation has also approved these texts with regard to doctrinal content, pedagogy and appropriateness for use in Idaho. Our resource library has copies of most of these materials available.

Preschool Texts:

<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>School/Parish & Copyright</u>
Our Sunday Visitor	I am Special (K)	English	S&P 2005
William H. Sadlier, Inc.	Discovering God	English	S&P 2000
Loyola Press	God Made Everything	English	S&P 2008

Primary Catechetical Texts:

<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>School/Parish & Copyright</u>
Benziger	Come Follow Me (K-8)	English	S&P 1998
	Share the Joy (K-6)	English	S 1997
	Christ Jesus, the Way (K-8)	English	S&P 2003/2004
	Cristo Jesús, el Camino (K-6)	Spanish	S 2003
Harcourt Religion	Walking by Faith (K-6)	English	S&P 1999

	Call to Faith (K-8) Un Llamado de Fe (Level A-D)	English Spanish	S&P 2005, 2007, 2008 P 2005
Loyola Press	Christ Our Life (K-8) Knowing our Catholic Faith: Beliefs and Traditions (1-8) Finding God (1-8)	English English English	S&P 1997, 2002, 2009 S 2000 S&P 2005, 2007
Resources for Christian Living (RCL)	Faith First Legacy Edition(K-8) Our Catholic Identity (1-8) Church History (7/8) Nuestra Identidad Catolica (1-8)	English English English Spanish	S&P 2000/01, 2006, 2007 S 1998 S 2006 S 1998
William H. Sadlier, Inc.	Coming to Faith (K-6) Acercandote a La Fe (K-6) Faith and Witness Program (7-8) We Believe (K-6) We Live Our Faith (7-8) Creemos (K-6) *One Faith, One Lord (7-8) Good overview, catch up text *Una sola fe un solo Señor (7-8)	English Spanish English English English Spanish English Spanish	S&P 1998/1999 S 1999 S&P 1998/1999 S&P 2004 S&P 2007 P 2005 S 2003 S 2003
Silver Burdett Ginn	This is Our Faith (K-8) Blessed Are We (1-8) Benedicidos (1-4)	English English Spanish	S 1998 S&P 2002/03/04/05/08 P 2008

High School Texts:

As one of the eight components of comprehensive youth ministry, catechesis is an essential element in forming young people in the faith. Following are texts that are appropriate to use in that catechetical ministry.

<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>School/Parish & Copyright</u>
Ave Maria Press	Catholic Social Teaching: Learning and Living Justice The Church: Our Story Encountering Jesus in the New Testament Marriage and Holy Orders: Your Call to Love and Service Old Testament: Our Call to Faith and Justice Our Catholic Faith: Living What We Believe Our Sacramental Life: Living and Worshipping in Christ This is Our Church: A History of Catholicism Your Life in Christ: Foundations of Catholic Morality	English English English English English English English English English	S 2001, 2007 S 1999, 2006 S 2003 S 2007 S 2005 S 2006 S 2003 S 2007 S 2001, 2008
Harcourt Religion Publishers	The Church Through History Journey Through the New Testament	English English	S 2007 S 2006

	Journey Through the Old Testament Justice and Peace: Our Faith in Action The Light of Faith Morality: Our Response to God's Love Vocation: Our Response to God's Call	English English English English English	S 2002, 2006 S 2007 S 2005 S 2005 S 2008
Resources for Christian Living (RCL)	Understanding the Catechism	English	S&P 1999, 1998
Saint Mary's Press	The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth Living Justice and Peace Written on Our Hearts (Old Testament)	English English English	S&P 2004 S 2002 S 2002

Sacramental Preparation:

<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Copyright</u>
Harcourt Religion	Call to Celebrate: Eucharist Call to Celebrate: Reconciliation Call to Celebrate: Reconciliation and Eucharist Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation and Eucharist (intermediate) Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation and Eucharist Celebrating Our Faith: Reconciliation and Eucharist (II) Call to Celebrate: Confirmation Celebrar nuestra fe: Reconciliación y Eucaristía Celebrar nuestra fe: Reconciliación y Eucaristía (Nivel II) Un llamado a celebrar: la Eucaristía Un llamado a celebrar: la Reconciliación Un llamado a celebrar: la Reconciliación y la Eucaristía (intermediario)	English English English English English English English Spanish Spanish Spanish Spanish Spanish Spanish	2007 2007 2007 2007 2000 2002 2008 2000 2002 2007 2007 2007
Loyola	Confirmed in the Spirit Confirmados en el Espiritu	English Spanish	2007
Pflaum	Together in Jesus – Eucharist Together in Jesus – Reconciliation Unidos en Jesús Primera Eucaristía Unidos en Jesús Primera Reconciliación	English English Spanish Spanish	2004 2004 2004 2004
Resources for Christian Living (RCL)	Eucharist Reconciliation Confirmation Eucaristía Reconciliación Will have online RCIA program soon (now available in English Spring 2010)	English English English Spanish Spanish	2003 2003 2007 2003 2003
Saint Mary's Press	Confirmed in a Faithful Community	English	2006
Paulist Press	I Have Chosen You (Confirmation-6 months)	English	2004

William H. Sadlier, Inc.	First Reconciliation	English	2000
	First Eucharist	English	2000
	We Believe and Celebrate First Communion	English	2006
	We Believe and Celebrate First Penance	English	2006
	Confirmed in a Faithful Community	English	2006
	Primera Reconciliación	Spanish	2000
	Primera Comunión	Spanish	2000
	Creemos y celebramos Primera Comunión	Spanish	2007
	Creemos y celebramos Primera Reconciliación	Spanish	2007
Silver Burdett Ginn	The Gift of the Eucharist	English	2000
	The Gift of Reconciliation	English	2000
Benziger	Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise (primary)	English	2006
	Eucharist: We Give Thanks and Praise (intermediate)	English	2006
	Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (primary)	English	2006
	Reconciliation: Pardon and Peace (intermediate)	English	2006
	Eucaristía: Damos gracias y alabanza	Spanish	2006
	Reconciliación: Perdon y paz	Spanish	2006
	Be Born Again (follows liturgical year)	English	2006
	Water and Spirit	English	

While the above are the primary catechetical texts for use in parishes in the Diocese of Boise, many parishes effectively use supplementary materials, as approved by their pastor, in catechetical ministry including Center for Ministerial Development's Confirming Disciples, lectionary-based materials like Pflaum, whole community catechesis like Generations of Faith, and family life materials like Harcourt's Growing in Love.

If you have any further concerns and/or questions regarding this list, please contact the Department of Parish Life and Faith Formation.

May God bless your efforts, as individuals and as a parish, in catechetical ministry.

Publisher	Phone number	Website
Ave Maria Press	1-800-282-1865	www.AveMariaPress.com
Center for Ministerial Development	1-253-853-5422	
Diocese of Phoenix	1-602-400-5708	www.ymcentral.com
Harcourt Religion Publishers	1-800-922-7696	www.HarcourtReligion.com
Loyola Press	1-800-621-1008	www.FindingGod.org
Our Sunday Visitor	1-800-348-2440	www.OSV.com
RCL Benziger	1-877-275-4725	www.RCLBenziger.com
Saint Mary's Press	1-800-533-8095	www.SMP.org
William H. Sadlier, Inc.	1-800-221-5175	www.SadlierReligion.com



Appendix 3

Confirmation Survey Results



CONFIRMATION SURVEY SUMMARY

January, 2009

Out of 47 parishes, 18 responded to the survey questions. Another 10 parishes sent us their programs or described them. Some parishes asked questions about Confirmation or sent their replies directly to the Bishop. In all, the Parish Life and Faith Formation heard from 28 parishes. The three Lewiston parishes reported as one program.

Summaries of replies are listed below.

1. How does your parish invite teens and others to consider the possibility of receiving the sacrament of Confirmation? (Corresponds to Inquiry Stage of RCIA)

Most common answer: participation in the Youth group

Other ideas: general invitation from the pastor, an introductory meeting

2. How does your parish welcome teens and others into the program to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation? (Corresponds to Rite of Welcoming in RCIA)

Most common answer: Presider introduces and blesses them at a Sunday Eucharist

Other ideas: Send out a personal letter; hold a parent/teen meeting and bless teens

3. How does your parish teach the truths regarding the Holy Spirit, his gifts and truths, the sacrament of Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols and the effects of the sacrament? (Corresponds to time of Catechesis in RCIA)

Most common answer: Classes and continuing with Youth Group

Other ideas: In-home groups, liturgy, apologetics, service hours

4. How does your parish help those preparing for confirmation undergo a conversion of heart, change their lives to more closely follow Christ's call? (Corresponds to continuing conversion/Rite of Election in RCIA)

Most common answer: Individual or group conversations where teens can ask questions

Other ideas: Interviewing those already confirmed, retreats, attending Mass, focus lessons on what Jesus means to me

5. What does your parish do during Lent to help those preparing for Confirmation to be more prepared to receive the sacrament? (Corresponds to Lenten preparation in RCIA, period of purification and enlightenment)

Most common answers: Retreat, classes on Lenten topics, Lenten service projects with Stations and/or parish supper, communal reconciliation

Other ideas: Parish novena or mission, Eucharistic adoration, examine beliefs about Jesus

6. How does your parish celebrate the Rite of Confirmation?

Most common answers: When the Bishop says, community reception, practice with meal and evening of reflection, celebrate with neighboring parishes

Other ideas: Active participation of sponsors, use special canon, youth take ministry parts, give theology of sacrament again

7. What does your parish program do after Confirmation for those newly confirmed? (corresponds to Mystagogy in RCIA)

Most common answers: Invited into parish ministries and training sessions, particularly liturgical ones, continue with Youth group or adult formation bible studies, help with religious ed and teen groups

Other ideas: One last class, search retreat, sponsors continue to meet with teens

8. How does your parish involve parents in the Confirmation program?

Most common answers: Come to first meeting, encourage their teens, attend Reception/potluck after retreat, come to classes (2)

Other ideas: Parents exchange names of students and pray for them, parental guide book, participate in rites, help with service projects and retreats, host dinners, act as models

9. How does your parish involve sponsors in the Confirmation program?

Most common answers: Attend some or all sessions and retreats, be in weekly contact with confirmandi, discuss items covered in class, attend rites and practice

Other ideas: Vouch for readiness, receive letter of responsibilities, receive a guidebook, self-determined

10. How are parish members involved in the Confirmation program?

Most common answers: Prays for those to be confirmed, asked to attend Mass and give good example, give talks at classes, help with reception and dinners, present at Rites, help with service projects

Other ideas: Write letters of affirmation, asked students what they discussed, families adopt one person and pray for him/her, give interviews after Mass

11. How are catechists and DRE prepared for their roles in the Confirmation program?

Most common answers: None needed (have been doing program for long time, are good, educating Catholics), planning meetings, attend special program (RCL, Life Teen)

Other ideas: Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, prayer, pastor support, yearly Evaluation

12. What published materials have you found helpful?

Most common answers: ROC/One/8, Bible, Catholic Catechism, apologetics, Zanzig's Confirmed in a Faithful Community

Other ideas: Lives of saints, RCIA, Sunday Visitor, Catholic Digest, Living the Mass, Sunday by Sunday, prayerbook, Moving in the Spirit (Faith and Life series, What Catholics Really Believe, Finding a Way Home

13. What liturgies (official prayers of the Church) and prayer experiences are included in your program?

Most common answers: Opening prayer of each session, various prayer experiences, communal reconciliation, retreats/evenings of reflection, Eucharistic adoration, rosary

Other ideas: Teen Mass each week-end, Entrance ritual at Mass, personal prayer time, Mass each session, pray in church, hold all rites during Sunday liturgy

14. How does your program address the different cultures present in your parish?

Most common answers: no need to address this, keep everyone together, Hispanic youth group and classes as well as English

Other ideas: accommodate examples, Cultural Mass for Hispanics, Hispanic volunteers, helpers available to translate, pastor encourages, have bilingual teacher and Spanish texts

15. How does your program serve adolescents with disabilities?

Most common answers: accommodate to need, one-to-one volunteer in class

Other ideas: train catechists, get parents to help, work in small groups in homes

16. How are confirmed welcomed in the adult parish community and involved in its mission?

Most common answers: Invited to participate in various ministries, especially in liturgy, service projects and religious ed

Other ideas: Youth Mass, create sense of belonging

17. How does your program make adjustments for youth with different levels of knowledge of their faith, attending Catholic school, participation in Church?

Most common answers: keep them all together, they can all learn

Other ideas: Confirm at 13 if have been attending Catholic School, have catchup classes on various topics

18. What would you recommend to a parish starting an adolescent confirmation program/process?

Most common answers: solid instruction on faith in accord with official teachings, have parish wide involvement, help teens establish personal relationship with Christ and the Church, use a good program that is flexible and for teens, good team of positive people, accommodate to reality, encourage sponsor relationship early

Other ideas: entrust serious responsibilities to youth, focus program on Gospels and Scripture, pick a time and stick to it, have personal interviews, retreats, teachers fast and pray, have in home format, give speakers outline of what you want them to cover, encourage questions, encourage service and ministry, keep it simple

19. What would you recommend a parish avoid in setting up a program?

Most common answers: don't lock teens into a program or requirements, be flexible, don't make it too intellectual or bookish, don't try to do it all by yourself

Other ideas: don't drag process out, don't refuse to let teens question and take their questions seriously, don't let youth receive Sacrament without understanding their faith and responsibilities, don't make this a remedial course covering all Catholic faith, don't have only Confirmation program (need other Youth programs as well) don't require service without giving opportunities, don't do it just to get it done

20. What do you believe are the primary purposes of an adolescent Confirmation program?

Most common answers: Move from faith of child to young adult, put Catholic faith into action in their lives, better understanding of faith and need for on-going formation, complete and affirm Baptismal anointing, grow in holiness, understand Sacrament and rites

Other ideas: Become bound to the church, understand the role of the Holy Spirit in life, form knowledgeable, practicing parishioners, involvement in community activities, receive graces of Confirmation, ask questions/receive answers so as to make better decisions

21. What questions do you have about adolescent Confirmation preparation?

Most common answer: What are Bishop's expectations

Other questions: Why treat this as a less important sacrament?
How do we deal with teens' hectic schedules?
What about post-Confirmation follow-up?
How can we help them continue in their faith?
How can we involve our youth in addition to Confirmation?
How can we help our youth have a metanoia experience?
Should we include teaching on sexual morality?
What are reasonable expectations for sponsors? How can they be better formed?

22. What help would you like to receive from diocesan level with regard to your Confirmation program?

Most common answers: Give us concrete, specific guidelines
· Age/grade

- Amount of service hours
 - Retreats, how many and how long
 - Length of program
 - What youth should know
- Help us create and give meaningful retreats for teens
Give workshops for catechists, sponsors, parents

Other ideas: Have Bishop send letter to candidates so they have something to reply to, freedom to run our own program for our own needs, list of current resources, time with the Bishop, tools for Parents, RCIT training, support and encouragement

Appendix 4

Helpful Tools





HELPFUL TOOLS

1. Rites

To increase parish participation and the solemnity of this Sacrament there are optional rites that may be used during Sunday Mass or at other times. Your Confirmation leader's guide book probably has good examples. [Continuing Disciples](#) and [I Have Chosen You](#) have particularly good ones. Some rites that have been used in the Boise parishes are included in this appendix. Check out [Confirmation Rites](#) on your search engine.

2. Retreats

There are usually good retreat plans in your leader's guide that you can adapt for your own purposes. There are also interesting suggestions on line; just try [Confirmation Retreats](#) on your search engine.

3. Interview questions

Again, there are good suggestions in your leader's guide. [Continuing Disciples](#) and [I Have Chosen You](#) have good examples. Questions should center on the youth's relationship with Christ, his/her understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation, where he/she is making changes in his/her life to live more fully as a Catholic for the rest of his/her life as a disciple of Christ, rather than their knowledge of specific items of faith. The youth need to be able to describe what living as a Catholic looks like and be able to state their desire and intention to live this way. They also need to be able to explain the basic items of our faith. The attached curriculum for 7th and 8th graders contains the basic truths of our faith.

Spanish programs need their own, appropriate questions. Check with your local Hispanic deacon or your Consejo de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana leaders.

4. Parent Packet

This is often helpful to prevent scheduling problems and to avoid misunderstandings.. Again, your leader's guide has good suggestions. We do have two parent packets here at the office. If you would really like a copy, let us know and we will mail you one. They're long, so we'll only run them off as requested.

Contact VChilders@rcdb.org or 342-1311.

5. Content of program

While the Sacrament of Confirmation is the material to be covered in preparation for the sacrament, many parishes run pre-programs to review our Catholic faith with their young people. While I would not necessarily recommend Paulist's [I Have Chosen You](#) as a text, the leader's guide has a good review of faith, quizzes and tests, and good discussion questions. Sadlier's [One Faith, One Lord](#) or [Una sola fe un solo Senor](#) is also a good overview text.

Another good resource is the approved curriculum for Catholic Schools. Grades 7 and 8 are included in this appendix.

Rite of Welcome

Sacred Heart Parish, Boise

Confirmation

(Follows the Prayer after Communion)

Introductory Statement (Roger & Linda Graefe)

Today, as part of our celebration, we will pray for, celebrate, and pledge our support to those of our community who are preparing for Confirmation.

We committed ourselves to support these people when they were baptized. They come to us now seeking Confirmation to strengthen their lives of faith. We greet them with pride for their willingness to take this step towards growing in faith. As we join in prayer today, may we be renewed in our remembrance of our own Baptism and Confirmation. May we be strengthened by Eucharist to follow Jesus more closely and bring His love to all in need.

Blessing (Candidates & sponsors will assemble in front facing the congregation.)

Roger & Linda Graefe

We now invite those who are preparing for Confirmation to come forward with their sponsor to be blessed and recognized by our community. (Read names as they are coming forward)

Presider (to the candidates)

Your presence here is a sign that God continues to send out the Spirit to renew the face of the earth. You stand as gifted and growing members of our community who seek to be confirmed. We pledged our support to you when you were baptized and again when you received Eucharist. Now you come to us ready to grow in faith and share your gifts in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Will you open your hearts to God's changing love as you prepare for Confirmation?

Candidates

We will.

Presider

Will you join your lives to Christ in discipleship through faithfulness and service?

Candidates

We will.

Presider

Will you accept the strengthening of the Holy Spirit as guide for your steps, your thoughts, and your actions?

Candidates

We will.

Presider (to the sponsors)

Sponsors, will you share yourselves and your faith with these candidates in order to help them become open to the Spirit in their lives?

Sponsors

We will.

Presider (to the candidates)

Bow your head and pray for God's blessing.

Loving Creator God, You have always welcomed those who seek you. We ask you to bless these young disciples who journey to you in preparation for the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. Amen

Candidate Covenant

St. Mark's Parish, Boise

My dear Child,

I am inviting you to deepen our relationship. Please enter into this covenant with me! A covenant is a solemn agreement between two parties, each one giving promises to the other. Through the ages I have promised my undying love to all humanity by entering into these covenants. Now, I make these promises to you:

- I promise to love you unconditionally. I will love you no matter how you look, no matter what you do. You are mine!*
- I promise to forgive you when you mess up and you are truly sorry for what you've done.*
- I promise to always speak to you. I probably won't use "words" that you'll hear, but I will speak to you through my written word, in a friend's hug, in a stranger's smile, and in your heart. Listen – I'm speaking!*
- I promise to teach you my ways. I teach through your parents, through your teachers, through the catechists and facilitators. I teach through the Sunday liturgy and in the homilies you hear each week. I teach through the Sacraments. I want you to learn of me so you can live a fuller life with me.*
- I promise to answer your prayers, both spoken and unspoken. I know it seems I don't always answer your prayers, but I promise I answer in the way best for you. I always answer. Call on me and trust my ways!*

You are my Child who I've loved since time began. I promise all these things to you and more as you make this journey with me. Now, what do you pledge to me?

*Love,
Your loving Father and Jesus Christ, your Brother*

My dear Father and Lord Jesus,

As I begin my preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, I hear and respond to your call to deepen my relationship with you and with your Church which began with my Baptism. To you, dear God and Jesus, to our pastor, Father Steve, to our parochial vicar, Father Bruno, to our deacons and to my St. Mark's parish family, I make these following promises:

- I promise to participate fully in all confirmation preparation sessions.*
- I promise to enter into prayer services and retreats with reverence to you and openness to your Holy Spirit.*
- I promise to willingly seek your voice and wisdom as you teach through my parents, sponsor, catechists and facilitators throughout this preparation process.*
- I understand, dear Lord, that others can also learn from me and my actions. I promise to give witness to living the life of a Catholic Christian by participating in activities of service to others, and by attending prayer and faith formation opportunities within our community.*
- You give me new life and strength through the Body and Blood of Jesus. I promise to share in the life of the Body of Christ, the Church, by fully participating in weekly Sunday liturgy.*

Dear God, I ask for the help of your Holy Spirit as I begin this preparation process. I pray your Spirit will enter me and help me learn and grow as a disciple of Christ. Help me be ready to freely choose to receive your gift to us, the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Candidate Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Date _____

Candidate Covenant Ritual

St. Mark's Parish, Boise

Confirmation Jan 31, 2010 Covenant Ritual

Leader:

Let us begin by praying the prayer that Jesus taught us.

All:

Our Father . . .

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you promised your disciples you would send your Spirit upon them so they would be empowered to carry on your Holy Church here on Earth. Open our minds and hearts to the power of your Spirit. Be with us as we begin our journey with you tonight. We ask you this, Lord Jesus, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

All:

Amen.

Leader:

Since the beginning, God has made promises to us, demonstrating his great love and care for us. He promised Adam and Eve a savior who would crush evil. He placed a rainbow in the sky as a sign of his covenant promise to Noah, vowing never to destroy humanity again. He chose Abraham and his descendants to become a holy nation, and by dying Jesus became the new everlasting covenant between God and all people of the world.

Tonight you have the opportunity to enter into a covenant with God. God promises you everlasting love, guidance in all things, and knowledge which comes from your parents, your teachers, and your faith community. In return, you will promise to explore your relationship with God, learn about the holy Catholic Church here on Earth, and attend Mass each Sunday.

One person from each group has received a scripture reading. When called, each group will come up and read the scripture reading, then we will sing while each person in the group signs the covenant and returns to their seat. Parents, as a witness to your teen entering into this covenant, please come forward when he or she signs.

Now, please join us in singing You Have Called Us. Group 1, please come forward now with your Scripture reading.

(Begin song. Sing refrain once, have them repeat.)

Group 1 Genesis 9:8,11,13

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all bodily creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth. I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

(group goes to sign while we sing Verse 1 and refrain)

Group 2 Genesis 15:4-7

Then the word of the Lord came to Abram: "No, Eliezer shall not be your heir; your own child shall be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars if you can. Just so, "he added, "shall your descendants be." Abram put his faith in the Lord, who saw that as an act of righteousness. God then said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession."

(same)

Group 3 Deuteronomy 5:1,7,11,12,16-21,32-33

Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and decrees which I proclaim in your hearing this day, that you may learn them and take care to observe them:

You shall not have other gods besides me.

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

Take care to keep holy the Sabbath day as the Lord, your God, commanded you.

Honor your father and mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear dishonest witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

Be careful, therefore, to do as the Lord, your God, has commanded you, not turning aside to the right or to the left, but following exactly the way prescribed for you by the Lord, your God, that you may live and prosper, and may have long life in the land which you are to occupy."

Group 4 Jeremiah 31: 31-34

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant and I had to show myself their master, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and kinsmen how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

Group 5 Luke 22:14-16, 19-20

When the hour arrived, Jesus took his place at table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. I tell you, I will not eat again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Then, taking bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying: "This is my body to be given for you. Do this as a remembrance of me." He did the same with the cup after eating, saying as he did so: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you."

Group 6 (if needed) 1 John 3:23-24

God's commandment is this: we are to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and are to love one another as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him and he in them. And this is how we know that he remains in us: from the Spirit that he gave us.

(Sing final verse and refrain while the last group signs and is seated.)

Leader:

Dear Lord, please bless those of us gathered here and be with us as we journey toward a new relationship with you. Open our hearts and minds. Let us feel your presence and your great love for us. Touch us with the fire of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

All:

Amen.

Announcements

Song:

Prince of Peace

Commitment Weekend

St. Mark's Parish, Boise

Dear Father,

The basket at the altar is full of commitment sheets that were signed during the spring retreat OR those to be confirmed bring the sheet with them and sign it during Mass (mostly depends on the number of people being confirmed). The sheet expresses that they want to be confirmed, that they willingly enter into the next phase of preparation, and that they intend to live out their Catholic faith for the rest of their lives.

Procedure:

- ◆ Announcement at the beginning of Mass regarding a special blessing for our teens who have come forward for Confirmation reception.
- ◆ After the Homily, the priest will announce that we have over 100 teens in our St. Mark's Catholic community who are presenting themselves for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation during the Easter Season.
- ◆ Priest: *(Adjust the first sentence of Father's greeting to meet your situation.)* "I ask all those teenagers, from 9-12th grade, please stand and be recognized by your parish community. *(If the group is small, candidates may be invited to front of the altar, where they sign their commitment sheet, place it in basket; then proceed with questions.)*

(Pause)

"Dear Candidates, I greet you today with a joyful heart and filled with thanks to God for your gift of faith. Through the ritual of your covenant signing (show covenant sheets) at your retreat, you have proclaimed your sincere desire to be prepared for the gift of the Sacrament of Confirmation and to fully participate in the process of your preparation. Today (this evening), you seek the formal acceptance of your faith community here at St. Mark's Church. I ask you to respond with: "We do!"

- ◆ "Do you come before this community of faith requesting preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation?" ("We do!")
- ◆ "Do you promise then to continue working with your catechists, parents and sponsors to deepen your understanding of and response to the Teachings of Christ?" ("We do!")

"I now ask the parents and sponsors of these teens to stand as well, along with their catechists and youth ministry leaders."

(Pause)

- ◆ "Dear sponsors and catechists, and parents, the first and irreplaceable teachers of these children, the community of St. Mark's expresses its gratitude to you for representing us in walking the journey of faith with our young people. Your faithful witness to them as disciples of Christ will help them embrace the love of Christ and deepen their bond with Him in His Church, as they

seek to become full, active, members of the Catholic Faith. “

◆ To the sponsors et al, and the rest of the community: “Members of St. Mark’s Catholic Community, I now present to you these candidates who have been on a journey of faith since their Baptism, years ago, when they were embraced by the Church as children of God and members of our family of faith. Through the years, we have shared with them the banquet of Christ’s sacrifice in the Eucharist. And now we wish to celebrate another marvelous step in their journey of faith – their Confirmation. And do you, community of St. Mark’s Catholic Church, promise to support our candidates with your witness to the Gospel of Christ and hold these young people in prayer as they continue the process of preparation to become fully initiated members of the Catholic Church? (Community responds, “We do!”)

◆ Then with gratitude and praise to our God, and in the name of this assembly and the whole Church, I bless these candidates in the name of Jesus our brother and Lord, who lives and reigns forever . AMEN.” Let us all offer them our support and love with applause. All may be seated.

Appendix 5

Curriculum Framework



Curriculum Framework

Taken from the Diocese of Boise's "Curriculum Guidelines for Catholic School Religious Education Programs" March 2005

Note: This framework is designed to be a review of essential doctrine.

Emphasis: Jesus came to teach about the Kingdom of God and to offer salvation to all people; the Church (people of God) continues his mission.

1. Scripture and Church Teaching

- A. Historic records exist to verify and support the existence of Jesus.
- B. Jesus was Jewish and practiced the traditions of his ancestors.
- C. Jesus grew in awareness of himself and his mission.
- D. Jesus is the second person of the Holy Trinity; he is fully human and fully divine.
- E. Jesus came to proclaim God's reign of love and justice for all.
- F. The Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus is the work of the Holy Trinity.
- G. The Holy Spirit is the Advocate promised by Jesus to be with his disciples.
- H. The Holy Spirit is active in our lives through sanctifying grace.
- I. Jesus is the full revelation of God's saving love.
- J. Jesus came to save all people.
- K. Jesus freely offered his life and experienced death for our salvation.
- L. Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead.
- M. Those who have died remain united with us through Jesus and his Church (Communion of Saints).
- N. Through Baptism, Jesus calls us to be his disciples and carry on his mission.
- O. Faith is God's gift to us and our response to God.

2. Liturgy and Sacraments

- A. The paschal mystery is celebrated and made present in the Mass.
- B. The Church's liturgy involves ritual actions of signs and symbols relating to creation, human life and our relationship to Jesus.
- C. The mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ.
- D. When we come to the sacraments with an open heart they strengthen us to live a Christian life.
- E. The Eucharist is the memorial meal of Christ's Passover to his Father through his death and resurrection.

3. Prayer

- A. Prayer is a deepening of our relationship with God.
- B. Vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplative prayer are three major expressions of prayer within Christian tradition.
- C. Scripture leads to an encounter with God's message for our lives and challenges us to action.
- D. When we pray the Lord's Prayer our prayer becomes an expression of praise, adoration, thanksgiving, petition and reconciliation.
- E. Prayers to learn and practice:
 - Nicene Creed
 - Lord's Prayer
 - Review prayers learned in previous years

4. Morality

- A. The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God.
- B. As followers of Christ we form our consciences and make moral decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Church.
- C. We face temptations through prayer, self-discipline and seeking help from others.
- D. We are called to grow in Christian love, chastity, honesty, justice and truthfulness.

5. Church

- A. The Church is a sacrament, a sign of Christ's presence in the world.
- B. The Church is a community of persons who believe, evangelize, pray, worship and serve together.
- C. The Church develops different rituals and traditions that reflect cultural and geographic uniquenesses.
- D. Councils were held to identify the needs within the Church.
- E. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church continues to grow in understanding of its mission.

6. Ecumenism

- A. Through Baptism, all Christians are united as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- B. The Church prays for the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ.
- C. The Church seeks to lead all people to salvation.
- D. We seek opportunities to teach others about God – evangelization.
- E. The Catholic Church respects those of other faith traditions.

7. Service

- A. A Christian steward receives God's gifts gratefully, cares for them and uses them for the benefit of others.
- B. Christians work to uphold the quality of life and the dignity of the human person.
- C. Jesus taught his followers to work for justice within the social, economic and political life of the community.

8. Words to know

Advocate	abstinence
catholic	church
councils	creed
disciples	evangelization
ecumenism	faith
grace	incarnation
moral conscience	paschal mystery
Pentecost	revelation
sacrament	salvation
sanctifying grace	social justice
stewardship	tradition
Vatican II Council	vices
virtues	



Confirmation Guidelines for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise