

Guidelines for Parish Confirmation Coordinators



Archdiocese of Mobile
Department of Catholic Education
Effective August 15, 2011

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:1-4)

With this powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early Church, the promise of the Lord was fulfilled when He told His followers at the Last Supper: "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth." (John 16:12) The Spirit of truth continues to be poured out upon the Church today. In the sacrament of Confirmation, through anointing with chrism and the imposition of hands, God imparts the Spirit to us. This sacrament empowers us to live as members of the Church into which we were welcomed in the waters of baptism, and strengthens us, who are fed at the Eucharistic table, to be witnesses to our faith in all we say and do.

It is important that those preparing to celebrate Confirmation be properly prepared through appropriate education and formation. Knowledge of the faith needs to be taught and a deeper relationship with God needs to be fostered in the minds and hearts of all who approach this sacrament. Sacramental preparation for Confirmation should lead a Catholic into a more lively involvement in his or her parish so that through word, worship, and service, each member of the Church continues to grow in the gifts of the Spirit. The focus of Confirmation preparation must be more than readiness for the celebration of the sacrament; it must also focus upon ongoing faith life once the sacrament has been celebrated.

The *Guidelines for Parish Confirmation Coordinators* contained in this binder have been developed by the staffs of the Office for Catholic Schools, the Office for Religious Education, and the Office for Youth Ministry. I am grateful for their fine work. It is intended to present archdiocesan policies and suggestions for enhanced parish Confirmation preparation. I thank you in advance for your cooperation with the policies as well as your attention to the guidelines and suggestions continued within this binder.

I join with you in praying that the sacramental preparation for Confirmation will be blessed by God and become an instrument that the Holy Spirit will use to fill the hearts of His faithful.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Thomas J. Rodi

Most Reverend Thomas J. Rodi
Archbishop of Mobile



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This binder was designed to assist parish leaders of the Archdiocese of Mobile in the preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation with 11th grade teens. Although we all belong to one Church, each parish in our archdiocese is unique. Our parishes are made up of individuals with distinctive gifts and challenges. This binder is meant to be a working guide, not a manual of rules and requirements. It is our hope that each parish's Confirmation Team, working with their pastor, will design and develop an 11th grade Confirmation Program, based upon these suggestions, that best suits the needs of their parish. As each parish team designs their own individual Confirmation program, we hope that the team remembers that, as one of our priests has so eloquently stated,

“Confirmation is not a Sacrament that is earned by the accumulation of service hours, by the memorization of text, nor by achieving a perfect attendance at class; it is a ‘confirmation of their Faith’, an encouragement to grow in the knowledge and love of Christ.”

The Department of Catholic Education stands ready to serve our parishes as they assist in the faith formation of our high school teens and as they witness the desire of our teens grow with each passing day. It is our prayer that all of our parishes enjoy truly Spirit-filled celebrations of Confirmation which bring about renewal and refreshment to the entire parish. Our hearts and hands are ready to help as needed. Each of you remains in our prayers.

Background Information

INTRODUCTION

During his ministry, Jesus frequently promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among his disciples. He fulfilled that promise first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost. In our own day, as a continuance of the grace of Pentecost within the Church, baptized Christians also experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. (*Receive the Gift: The Age of Confirmation*, pg. 1, USCCB ©2004)

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.** (CCC §1309)

It must be explained . . . 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. (CCC, §1285)

THE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

In the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation, the anointing with the Sacred Chrism, the imposition of hands, and the prayer over the candidates are the symbols of this sacrament. They provide rich meaning and understanding about the effects of the sacrament on the confirmand.

CCC 1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

CCC 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.
- 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 of 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.

CCC 1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark*, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.

CCC 1305 This "character" perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi ex officio*)."

SPONSORS FOR CONFIRMATION

Can. 892 As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present; it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.

Can. 893 §1 A person who would undertake the office of sponsor **must fulfill the conditions mentioned in Canon 874.**

§2 It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for confirmation.

Since Canon 893 regulates that the qualifications of the Confirmation sponsor are the same as the criteria as for the baptismal godparent, then Canon 874 must be applied.

Can. 874 §1 To be admitted to undertake the role of sponsor, a person must:

1. be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and the intention of performing this role;
2. have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role

- to be undertaken;
4. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
 5. not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

WHO CAN RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT?

A description of **who can receive this sacrament** may be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 1306 -1311. It is also in the *Code of Canon Law*.

Can. 842 §1 A person who has not received Baptism cannot be validly admitted to the other sacraments.

§2 The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Blessed Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian Initiation.

Can. 889 §1 Every baptized person not yet confirmed and only such a person is capable of receiving confirmation.

§2 To receive confirmation licitly outside the danger of death requires that a person who has the use of reason be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises.

Can. 890 The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate time.

Background Information

ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY

AGE OF CONFIRMATION

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Mobile that Confirmation is to be celebrated in the 11th grade, effective August 15, 2011. All parishes within the archdiocese are to adhere to this grade in establishing two-year formation programs for Confirmation.

For parishes who will confirm only eleventh graders every year, the Confirmation formation process should begin no later than January of the 9th grade. The celebration of the sacrament would occur in the spring of the 11th grade.

For those parishes that wish to combine two grades, the celebration of the sacrament will occur in the fall for those teens in the 11th and 12th grades. The formation program would start in the fall of their 9th and 10th grade years.

CONFIRMATION FORMATION PROGRAM

Ideally, a Confirmation Formation program includes:

- Reflection upon the sacrament of Confirmation (see pg. 14)
- Spiritual Formation Options (see pg. 15)
- Service and Discipleship Options (see pg. 17)
- Opportunities for Parent/Sponsor involvement (see pg. 19)

Because each parish is different in its resources and challenges, the archdiocese will not establish policies on the number of classes, events, retreats, or service projects for candidates in order to be confirmed. Confirmation is to be parish based and it is up to the pastor to design the Confirmation Formation Program in his parish.

SPONSORS

Sponsors for the sacrament of Confirmation must meet the conditions outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* Can. 874 §1 and in this policy. The person admitted to the role of sponsor must:

1. be designated by the one to be confirmed;
2. not be one of the candidate's parents;
3. is to have the qualifications and the intention of performing this role;
4. have completed the sixteenth year of age;
5. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist;
6. be an active, practicing Catholic;
7. be receiving the sacraments of Penance and Communion frequently;
8. be married in the Catholic Church, if married;
9. lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;

The pastor of the designated sponsor is normally responsible for determining that he/she understands the sponsor's role and is qualified to assume it.

The Ministry of the Parish Confirmation Coordinator

Sample Job Description

A Confirmation Coordinator facilitates the organization and implementation of the Confirmation Formation program.

The position of Parish Confirmation Coordinator can be held by a number of people on the parish staff, but usually the position will be held by the Parish Catechetical Leader, the Youth Ministry Leader, or perhaps by another whose primary responsibility within the parish is Confirmation Formation.

For most parishes, Confirmation Formation will be directed by a team of adults, with the Confirmation Coordinator acting as the team leader.

The Confirmation Coordinator:

- Establishes the calendar for the Confirmation Formation program
- Collaborates with parish staff and other parish organizations regarding Confirmation programming and celebration
- Recruits and trains leaders (or coordinates leadership training) necessary to carry out the program details
- Coordinates necessary communication with teens, parents, sponsors and the community, through meetings, mailings, electronic communication and other means
- Leads the rehearsal for the Confirmation liturgy under the direction of the pastor

Working Relationships:

- The Parish Confirmation Coordinator should work closely and remain in communication with the pastor and with those parish leaders who regularly work with high school teens (PCL, YML or any others)
- The Parish Confirmation Coordinator can call upon the staffs of the Office of Religious Education and the Office of Youth Ministry for assistance at the archdiocesan level.

Knowledge and Skills:

In addition to an understanding of the Confirmation program of the parish, it is useful for the coordinator to have an understanding of:

- Teen culture
- Psychological and faith development of older teens
- The skills necessary to build community among teens
- Creative learning experiences for teens
- The theology of the sacrament of Confirmation
- The resource from the USCCB: *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*. (The text of this document can be

found on the website of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability:
<http://www.ncpd.org/views-news-policy/policy/church/bishops/sacraments>)

The Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Education offers classes and workshops for Coordinators of Confirmation. It is strongly recommended that Confirmation Coordinators complete the Confirmation track of the Wellsprings of Faith program (CONF 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 & 5.0). It is also strongly recommended that Confirmation Coordinators work to complete Basic Certification of the Wellspring of Faith program.

The Ministry of the Parish Confirmation Coordinator

Wellsprings of Faith – Confirmation Track

Archdiocese of Mobile Confirmation Training Courses

The following courses are designed for those who serve as Parish Confirmation Coordinators and their teams. Parish Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders, and Catechists in the parish high school program are also invited and encouraged to participate.

CONF 1.0 Adolescent Catechesis and Evangelization

Young people grow in their Catholic faith by falling in love with the person and message of Jesus Christ, and mature in faith when they let that love form and transform them within the Church. Adolescent catechesis is one stage of that lifelong process of embracing the Catholic way of life. In this course, we will explore the foundational elements in this process: knowledge and love for our Lord Jesus Christ, personal and communal prayer, Scripture reading and study, deeper knowledge of the foundational Church teachings (in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*), service opportunities and vocational discernment, mentoring, and active belonging to a community of disciples.

CONF 2.0 Adolescent Catechesis: Program Design and Resources

Building on the first course, we will explore and give practical ideas on:

- ❖ How to empower faith-filled families and youth-friendly parishes
- ❖ How to design a comprehensive, intentional and systematic faith formation program for adolescents
- ❖ USCCB's *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age*
- ❖ Program design, resources, models and formats for adolescent catechesis

CONF 3.0 Confirmation Formation Program Design

In this course, we will review the Archdiocesan policy and guidelines regarding preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. We will also share best practices, models and formats, as well as the components for Confirmation catechesis and preparation – retreats, prayer experiences, service opportunities, rituals, etc.

CONF 4.0 Sacraments of Initiation

In this course, we will survey the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist from historical, theological and canonical lenses with a special emphasis on Confirmation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will be the primary resource for this course.

CONF 5.0 Designing Retreats & Prayer Experiences with Adolescents

Effective catechesis engages people in understanding, knowing and entering into a relationship with Jesus and his teachings. How will young people deepen their relationship with Jesus? In this course, we will outline prayer and worship, both personal and communal, from our rich tradition. We will look at the research about how and when adolescents pray, and what they believe about religion and spirituality. Then, with this background regarding our tradition and the research, we will examine how to design meaningful retreats and prayer experiences for adolescents.

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Scheduling Your Confirmation Formation Program

One of the toughest jobs in planning an effective Confirmation Formation Program for high school students is that of scheduling. **The most successful parish Confirmation programs are those that offer flexibility.** Having options for teens and families shows them that the Church desires to work with families, rather than becoming yet another activity on the calendar and a source of stress.

When scheduling your Confirmation Formation Program, keep these points in mind:

- You do not need to address “everything that every Catholic needs to know” in your program.

Remember that your candidates are receiving a quality foundational program through their Adolescent Catechesis program, whether it is at their Catholic School or in your parish’s RE program.

- Do families in your area “parish shop”, attempting to find the parish which has the least “requirements” for a sacrament?

Perhaps the Confirmation Coordinators, PCLs, YMLs and pastors from neighboring parishes can come together prior to the beginning of the formation process and agree on a set of guidelines which each parish will adhere to in their Confirmation Formation Program. If the parish guidelines are similar, and if parishes design programs that offer options, families will not have the need to “parish shop”.

- Will you include parents in a large portion of your program?

If so, be aware of their scheduling needs and ensure that every gathering is meaningful for them as parents.

- What activities, both in school and outside of school, do many of your candidates participate in? Can you arrange your schedule around major outside events?

For example, for most of our Archdiocese, scheduling activities on a Friday night or a Saturday in the fall season will almost guarantee poor attendance. Be conscious of outside activities that may conflict with your program schedule and try your best to schedule around major events.

- If your parish “requires” certain activities of their candidates, such as retreats or group service projects, it’s best to offer the activity at two or more times, and also to publicize the dates well in advance (the earlier, the better).

For example, if you ask your candidates to go on a retreat, will you offer the retreat on two dates? If you can’t offer the retreat multiple times, could another retreat (such as SEARCH, a NET retreat, or a neighboring parish’s Confirmation retreat) fulfill that requirement?

- Do some teens in your program receive their catechetical instruction in a Catholic School and others receive their catechetical instruction in a Parish RE program?

If so, be especially conscious of possible duplication of material covered in the Adolescent Catechesis programs and your Confirmation Formation Program.

Although scheduling with high school teens and their families can be difficult, thoughtful scheduling can smooth out many possible future wrinkles in your program! The time devoted to scheduling is time well spent!

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Reflection upon the Sacrament of Confirmation

Faith formation is a life-long process: from cradle to grave. Consistent, formal catechetical instruction should take place during all twelve years of a young person's formal education years.

Adolescent Catechesis is the term for religious instruction during the high school years, whether this takes place in a Catholic School or in a parish program. It should be noted that teens who attend a Catholic High School are not required to attend the Adolescent Catechesis Program at their parish, since they receive their adolescent catechesis at the school.

Confirmation Formation is separate from, and in addition to, Adolescent Catechesis and only occurs in a parish. *All* teens who wish to be confirmed are *expected* to attend the Confirmation Formation Program offered by their parish.

The Confirmation Coordinator needs to keep in mind that the bulk of catechetical instruction during the Confirmation formation years will be accomplished through the Adolescent Catechesis program of the Catholic High School or the parish Religious Education program (see Appendix D) and that it is unnecessary to repeat that instruction in the Confirmation formation program. However, every Confirmation formation program should have catechetical elements woven into it throughout the two-year preparation period. It is beneficial to explore some topics with the candidates in a deeper manner as they can now understand them differently in light of their Confirmation formation. Topics that may be presented include:

- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- The Effect of the sacrament of Confirmation
- The Rite of Confirmation
- Stories of the Lives of the Saints

These catechetical aspects may be integrated into your formation program in a variety of ways. Catechetical elements do not necessarily need to be "stand alone" sessions, but rather they can be incorporated into service projects, spiritual formation activities or other gatherings for your Confirmation candidates. Catechetical subjects may also be presented to candidates along with their parents and sponsors. (See Appendix C for suggested formats.)

The primary textbooks used in the Archdiocese of Mobile for Confirmation must appear on the USCCB's "*Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series*". Please see Appendix A for information regarding verification of texts.

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Spiritual Formation Options

Spiritual formation is an essential component of every Confirmation Formation program. The goal of the spiritual formation component of the Confirmation Formation program should be to help the candidates develop their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The process for spiritual formation can take a variety of forms such as Mass, adoration, small group discussions, scriptural reflection, praying with music, guided meditation, and the like. Exposing teens to a variety of prayer forms should be a high priority for every Confirmation Coordinator. A variety of prayer experiences should be intertwined throughout the preparation period, and opportunities for prayer should be offered at every gathering.

Some parishes may choose to have their Confirmation candidates participate in one or more retreats during their period of formation. A retreat may incorporate a variety of different prayer forms, allowing the candidate to experience new or deeper forms of prayer. Longer retreats, such as full day or weekend models, can allow a teen the time to truly “get away” and to communicate with Our Lord in a more substantial way than they may have ever experienced before.

If a retreat experience is an important component of your parish’s Confirmation preparation program it is essential that you offer options to the candidates. At the beginning of the formation program, it may be best to list retreat possibilities with dates, locations, and costs. As teens get older, their schedules get busier. Additionally, parents may have financial concerns, especially if they have more than one child who may be going through the Confirmation Formation program.

The Offices of Religious Education and Youth Ministry offer courses in planning and directing retreats and prayer experiences. The Offices also have a number of text resources in their libraries for planning and directing retreats. They also have access to a number of web resources. Small parishes may choose to work with neighboring parishes in coordinating and directing retreats. Other retreat options are also offered throughout the archdiocese. Some of these options are described below. Please call either Office for assistance in planning or coordinating your retreat.

Retreats available within the Archdiocese

SEARCH Retreats

The OYM staff, along with a team of adults and teens, directs SEARCH Retreats in the archdiocese each year. The SEARCH Weekend is a Christian Life experience. It is designed for high school teens. A SEACH Weekend includes sharing by the community members, songs, prayer, small group discussions, Eucharist, Reconciliation, quiet time and fellowship among the retreatants. The weekend begins on Friday evening and goes through Sunday afternoon.

NET (National Evangelization Team).

The mission of NET Ministries is to challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church. The Office of Youth Ministry sponsors the NET Team for two weeks in the Archdiocese, usually in the spring. Please contact the Office of Youth Ministry to schedule a NET Retreat at your parish. Information about NET Ministries can be found at www.netusa.org.

TAG 3 Team

TAG 3 is a team of college students from Spring Hill College who offer retreats in the Archdiocese. The team can be contacted through: campusministry@shc.edu.

Resources:

The Office of Religious Education and the Office of Youth Ministry in both Mobile and Montgomery have a number of retreat resources available in their libraries. There are also several resources available through publishers and subscription services. Many of these resources outline the theme and timetable for the retreat coordinator, giving suggestions for icebreakers, large and small group discussion questions, and an outline on preparing the talks, prayer services and penance services. Below is a list of some of the resources available in the Office libraries:

Getaways with God - Youth Retreats for Any Schedule, published by Saint Mary's Press

Youth Retreats for Any Schedule, published by Saint Mary's Press

Confirmed in a Faithful Community: A Senior High Confirmation Process Coordinator's Manual (two retreats included), published by Saint Mary's Press

Confirmed in the Spirit-Directors Guide (retreat included), published by Loyola Press

Oneight Confirmation Program, published by Life Teen

In addition, the Offices can assist you in obtaining the subscriptions for these resources:

Fire and Ice Retreat, available through Life Teen Subscription Service

Gifts of the Spirit, available through the Center for Ministry Development Subscription Service

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Service and Discipleship Options

“Confirmation deepens our baptismal life that calls us to be missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ in our families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. Through Confirmation, our personal relationship with Christ is strengthened. We receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intensive manner with great emphasis given to the persons of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service.” *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

Teens today learn best by “doing” and “experiencing”. As a group, teens are drawn to the experience of service as a way of truly living their faith. Many of our candidates are very involved in service before they come into the Confirmation Formation program. Others however, may need an opportunity to experience their first formal encounter of serving.

The preparation for service and the opportunity to process the experience afterwards are as important as the service experience itself. Teens need to know why and how they will serve. They also need the opportunity to come together afterwards to discuss the experience itself and how this experience affected those they served, the wider community and themselves. It is also important to help the teens make the connection between the experience, our call to serve those in need, and Catholic social teaching.

When considering the service component of your program, determine the end goal, and then consider the best way your program can bring about that goal. Think about offering “service projects” instead of tallying a set number of hours. Consider whether your planned service component looks like “discipleship mentoring” or more like a spreadsheet. Ask yourself if your service component will truly help your candidates become “missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ”.

Pastors and Confirmation Teams may want to consider these points:

- It is a good practice to **interview** the candidate at the beginning of their journey to discuss our call to serve as disciples and their individual talents. If the candidate is already living the life of a missionary servant in their school, their community and their parish, do they really need to take on additional service? If a candidate needs to have more opportunities to serve, where would their talents best be used? Would they do best working with small children or older adults or by working with their hands repairing homes? Which service opportunities would appeal to them?
- It is good to **involve parents and sponsors** in service projects as much as possible. It may be best to ask families to take service projects as a family team, giving the parents the tools to prepare their children for the experience and to process the experience afterwards. Possible family projects include: raking

leaves for parish shut-ins, making food baskets and delivering them to the poor for St. Vincent DePaul at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and working with the children's liturgy at the parish.

- Allow a time for the candidates to become familiar with the ministry programs in their parish. Set up a **mentoring program** with the parish ministries, such as the Liturgy Committee, altar care, music ministry, or a social service committee so that the teens are given the opportunity to work within the parish with an adult to guide them along the way.
- Network with the youth ministers and Confirmation Coordinators of neighboring parishes to share ideas for service projects and to plan combined group service opportunities.
- Before offering any service opportunity, check the location for potential safety and liability concerns.
- **Always remember: Adults working with teens must adhere to the Archdiocese of Mobile Child Protection Guidelines.**

IDEAS FOR SERVICE PROJECTS:

1. Working at a children's day care center or Boys and Girls Clubs
2. Working with persons who are physically impaired
3. Visiting people who are ill or shut-in and accompanying Communion ministers to bring Communion to the ill
4. Doing work for agencies such as St. Vincent DePaul Society, Catholic Social Services, Habitat for Humanity, or Catholic HEART Work Camp
5. Tutoring younger children
6. Assisting in your parish Religious Education program or Vacation Bible School
7. Distributing/serving food to poor persons or working in the food pantry

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Parent/Sponsor Meetings

“The catechesis of adults ... is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.” (Catechesi Tradendae, 43)

The formation of adults is ongoing throughout their lives, but special moments provide opportunity for deepening one’s understanding and relationship with God. Parental and Sponsor Gatherings in preparation for Confirmation are such opportunities.

The *Code of Canon Law* reminds us that parents and, likewise, those who are to undertake the office of sponsor “are to be properly instructed on the meaning of the sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it; personally or through others the pastor is to see to it that the parents are properly formed by pastoral directions and by common prayer, gathering several families together and where possible visiting them.” (Can 851 §2)

It is important that parents and candidates know and understand the details of the parish Confirmation Formation Program: the dates of meetings, sponsor qualifications, classes, retreats, service projects, practices and the time for the celebration of the Sacrament.

It may be best to have an initial meeting with parents and candidates before the Confirmation preparation process begins to handle these concerns. However, this information is not meant to be the essence of subsequent Parent or Sponsor Gatherings.

See *Appendix C: Outlines for Gatherings* for optional formats for these gatherings. Remember to have a plan for giving options for parents or sponsors who have difficulty with the scheduled gatherings. Will you offer a make-up session? Will you have the session videotaped? Will there be handouts? You may want to post a video of the meeting and any handouts on the parish website.

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Interviews

Although interviewing candidates on an individual basis can be time consuming, the outcome from these interviews is well worth the time and effort invested. Interviews can accomplish different goals depending upon when the interview is conducted. Many pastors and Confirmation Program Coordinators choose to conduct two interviews with their candidates:

- An interview near the beginning of the program to get to know the candidate and to begin talking about the importance of service (This may be an excellent time to determine what service the candidate currently performs.)
- An interview near the end of the preparation program to assess the candidate's readiness/willingness and to allow the candidate an opportunity to reflect on the entire formation process

In smaller parishes, the interviews may be able to be conducted entirely by the pastor and/or the Confirmation Coordinator. In larger parishes, where there are a large number of candidates, an interview team may be needed. If a team needs to be gathered, care should be taken in selecting interview team members. It is best to gather adults for the interview team who play an active role in the Confirmation Formation or Adolescent Catechesis program and who communicate well with teens. If two interviews are conducted, it may be helpful if the same person directs both interviews with the teen. In this way, the growth over the Confirmation Formation period may be more easily seen.

Child Protection policies should always be kept in mind when conducting interviews. Interviews should be conducted out of earshot of others, but must be located in a place where both the interviewer and the candidate can be seen by others in the area. Some coordinators choose to interview candidates in the presence of a parent.

It is always a good practice to begin and end interviews with a short prayer of intercession and/or thanksgiving.

Early Interview Suggestions:

Think of the interviews at this early stage of the process as opportunities to welcome and provide hospitality for the candidates, not as a form of interrogation about their personal life or faith. This interview should be a time to get to know each other, answer initial questions from the candidate, and begin to talk about service opportunities.

Beginning the interview with a discussion of school, school activities or sports is usually a good place to start. Teens can be nervous during a one-on-one interview such as

this, but talking about school, or college sports teams may be a comfortable topic for the candidate. From here, the interviewer can guide the discussion to existing school, community and parish service activities. The interviewer can conclude the discussion with a review of the parish requirements for Confirmation and answer any questions that the candidate may have at this time.

Ending Interview Suggestions:

Whereas the first interview may have been one of welcoming and introduction, this interview may take on a deeper character. This interview should help the candidate discern his/her readiness for the sacrament of Confirmation. The candidate should also be given a chance to talk about the Confirmation Formation process and to examine how he/she has changed during the two-year program. It is a good practice to give the candidates an idea of the scope of the interview before the actual interview date.

Again, remember that the candidate may be somewhat nervous. The interviewer needs to be joyful and welcoming.

Possible interview questions may include:

- What was your favorite part of your Confirmation Formation process? Why?
- What are some of your experiences of prayer?
- What is your favorite gift of the Holy Spirit? Tell me about a time you experienced this gift of the Spirit.
- Tell me about some of the service you offered. What did you like best about this experience?
- How is service a sign of your commitment of time and talent to the parish community? If you were to do it again how might it be different?
- What saint's name have you chosen for Confirmation? Why did you choose this name?
- Why did you choose your Confirmation sponsor?
- Why do you wish to be confirmed? What does it mean to you?

From the interview and from the Confirmation Team's regular contact with the candidate, the Confirmation Team should be able to recognize the following indicators of growth in faith: (These indicators are taken from the "outcomes for adolescent faith formation" from the National Initiative on Adolescent Catechesis.)

- Developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through regular prayer
- Sharing the Good News through words and actions, and working for peace, justice and human dignity
- Participating fully consciously, actively and regularly in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church
- Articulating the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Faith, and demonstrating a commitment to learning and growing in this faith

- Applying Catholic ethics, virtues, principles, values and social teaching to moral decision-making and life situations
- Discerning and using their gifts to participate in the mission of the parish and larger community
- Exploring God's call to vocation through prayer, reflection and discernment

Specific Interview Challenges

Interviews are a useful vehicle for communication, but challenges can arise during interviews. The following are possible challenges which may arise:

What if the candidate is extremely nervous/upset?

For some teens, interviews are new territory. Other teens may feel intimidated by people in authority. Regardless of the reason, you will have some teens who will be more nervous than others. A small case of nerves can often be calmed with a friendly smile and casual banter beginning the interview. However, if a teen begins to cry, or gets physically ill, it's best to try to determine the root cause of the nervousness and try to put the teen in an environment where he/she may be less anxious. It may be best to delay the interview for another time.

What if the candidate has special needs?

Interviews can be modified or eliminated in order to meet the needs of your special needs candidates. Work with the candidate's parents in order to determine the best plan for persons with developmental or mental disabilities. "Persons with disabilities who may never attain the use of reason are to be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents or guardian, to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at the appropriate time". (#16, *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, USCCB) More information can be found on the website of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability: www.ncpd.org.

When should Confirmation be delayed?

When the candidate does not request the sacrament or if a lack of readiness is manifest, Confirmation may be delayed. If it is delayed, the teen and his/her parents should be told clearly what aspect of readiness needs to be demonstrated, how that might be accomplished, and when Confirmation might be expected.

What if a candidate says that they have chosen not to be Confirmed?

If a teen states that he/she does not want to be confirmed, try to determine his/her reasoning. There are many reasons for which a person may decide not to be confirmed. It is not automatically a sign that the person has rejected the faith. Often a refusal for the sacrament is the result of an unanswered question or from misinformation. If the interviewer isn't able to address the teen's concerns immediately, the interviewer should enlist the pastor's help. The pastor can work with the teen and his/her family to determine if the sacrament should be delayed at this time.

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Suggested Rituals for your Confirmation Formation Program

The Church sees the Rite of Christian Initiation of adults as “*the model for all catechesis*”. It realizes that this journey is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. (RCIA #4) This journey includes not only periods for making inquiry and for maturing, but also the steps marking the (catechumens’) progress. (RCIA #6)

The Church does not have any rites for Confirmation formation. However we may adapt some of the RCIA rites to be used as rituals in the preparation for Confirmation. The formation for the sacrament of Confirmation can be enriched by including such rituals along the way.

Perhaps, Nathan Mitchell expressed it best by saying,

“Rituals do not simply affirm our experience, they rearrange, redescribe, rewrite, redefine it. ... we become hospitable, for instance, not by analyzing hospitality but by greeting guests, offering them the kiss of peace, washing feet, serving them food, adoring Christ’s presence in them. For the goal of ritual is not to produce a meaning, but to produce an outcome – a person redefined by grace as God’s own welcoming heart and hand.”
 (“One Bread, One Body”, *Worship*, January, 1997)

Three particular points on the journey of the teen seeking the sacrament of Confirmation that may be marked by a ritual are:

1. the beginning few weeks of the two year formation process of the candidate for Confirmation as a way to “welcome” them into the process;
2. six to eight weeks before the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation to enroll their names signifying their intent to be confirmed; and
3. post-Confirmation celebration of a commitment to a life of service and of following Christ.

Before the celebration of the first two rituals suggested below, it is recommended that candidates are interviewed to determine their readiness.

RITUAL OF WELCOME

This ritual might be celebrated in the early stages of your formation program (fall of the 9th grade) at a Sunday Liturgy or some other time when the parish community is present. It may be best to choose a Sunday in Ordinary Time during which the readings emphasize the following of Christ.

As in the RCIA Rite of Acceptance, the sponsor, if available, may introduce the candidate. The candidate's intent would be examined, and the teen would be given some symbol (i.e. cross as a sign of one's commitment to follow Christ or a Bible as a sign to live the Gospel) as a "welcoming" gift.

RITUAL OF ENROLLMENT

Six to eight weeks before the celebration of Confirmation, the teen might be invited to "enroll" his/her name indicating their desire to be confirmed. During this ritual, the candidates are called forward by "name" along with their sponsors, if available, who witnesses their signature in a special book of Confirmation names. The pastor along with the whole community then prays for these candidates for Confirmation.

These final weeks might correspond with the season of Lent, and thus can become a time when motives are purified (comparable to the RCIA Rite of Election) and a commitment is made to enter into a time of more intense preparation for the sacrament. Ideally, a parish would schedule some of these activities during this part of the candidate's formation: celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation or penance service; the study of the lives of saints as models in the faith; retreats, prayer experiences and celebrations of the Word.

COMMISSIONING RITUAL

After the sacrament of Confirmation has been received, the parish may wish to celebrate a "commissioning" ceremony with the Confirmands during which they make a public commitment to be actively engaged in parish and church life, to continue their faith and spiritual formation for the rest of their lives, and to commit to a life of service in Christ Jesus.

No matter how the steps along their two-year journey are highlighted in your parish, it is extremely important that the candidates are suitably prepared for the rituals and are engaged in a "mystagogical" reflection after the rituals are celebrated. In this way, the candidate understands the meaning of these markings of their journey of faith.

RESOURCES

Below are a few of the resources that are available that may be helpful in planning these ritual experiences.

Amodei, Michael. *Send Out Your Spirit*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2010. The Leader's Manual has excellent reflective activities with Scripture and academic references that may be helpful in the design of these rituals.

Ciernick, Bernard and Santiago, Louise. *The All-Purpose, Hands-On Confirmation Director's Manual*. Dayton, OH: Hi-Time Pflaum Publishing, 1999. Pages 55-59 have a model for a ritual of welcoming which includes

a great deal of candidate participation. It has many other helpful materials, handouts and forms.

Delgatto, Laurie. *Confirmed in a Faithful Community*. Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 2006. The Coordinator's Manual has helpful articles in the invitation, formation and mission sections when looking for material for these rituals.

Piercy, Robert. *The Gift of the Spirit: Rituals and Retreats*. Parsippany, NJ: Scott Foresman, 2003. Pages 21-30 have suggestions laid out for a ritual of welcoming, as well as other rituals and retreats for Confirmation.

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Inclusion

In recent years the American Bishops have been writing and encouraging all in the Church in the United States to be respectful of the diversity which is present in our parishes today in language, history, customs, rituals and traditions.

Today the “Catholic Church in the United States embraces the rich cultural pluralism of all the faithful, encourages the distinctive identity of each cultural group, and urges mutual enrichment.” (National Directory for Catechesis, page 29)

Additionally, we are called to be respectful of people who have physical or mental challenges.

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community. Accessibility involves far more than physical alterations to parish buildings. Realistic provision must be made for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations such as the sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick. (Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities, November 1978; revised 1989)

Given these directions, the Confirmation Coordinator should bear in mind these points:

When planning the formation program and parent meetings

- Know who will be participating in this program (cultural background, language, abilities, limitations, etc.).
- Recognize those who may have difficulties in English, or in written or spoken language.
- Know if it is necessary to communicate in various ways (verbal as well as written). Consider having translators (including sign language) or offering Braille or large-print worship aids, hymnals and class materials.
- Will there be participants who have any religious customs (such as ethnic traditions) that need to be respected? It is essential to take time to meet with participants and/or leaders from various cultures to understand what some of their expectations might be.

- Note: Particular respect needs to be shown when participants belong to the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church.

When planning the Confirmation Liturgy

- Be aware of the mixture of ages, cultural backgrounds, and languages that will be present at this Confirmation Liturgy. (Remember grandparents, visitors, extended families, etc. will be present.)
- Allow all teens, including those who use wheelchairs, walkers, etc, to be seated with the entire Confirmation group. Allow all to have the same access to the Archbishop
- Provide information, especially for sponsors and family members in their native language if needed
- Invite the various ethnic communities who will be present to be responsible for a song, instrumental music, a reading, etc. in the liturgy
- Provide translations of the readings if needed
- Encourage wearing appropriate cultural attire

When planning the reception

Include all cultures in planning the reception with an awareness of their preference in food and drink

The question we each must ask is:

Will this program and liturgical celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation enable all to feel that they are full, participating members of one Faith, one Church in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Planning the Confirmation Liturgy

The explanation of the **Rite of Confirmation** may be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1293-1301

Date for Confirmation

When planning to have Confirmation in your parish, a letter needs to be sent to the Archbishop with this request including some suggested dates. This should be done as soon as possible, but at least 6 months in advance, so the Archbishop's schedule can be worked out. Either the pastor or the Confirmation Coordinator might send the letter.

The Archbishop will determine the date for your parish's Confirmation, and a letter will be sent to the pastor with this information as well as guidelines for the liturgical celebration and a liturgy planning form.

The liturgy planning form must be filled out and returned to the Office of the Archbishop no later than three weeks before the liturgy.

General Information Regarding the Rite of Confirmation

Photography:

- No photography (videotape or still) is to take place during the liturgy. (It is very important to review this point with parents prior to the celebration.)

Stoles for Candidates:

- Stoles are a sign of the ordained and therefore should not be worn at Confirmation.

Worship Aids:

- If preparing a worship aid for the ceremony, permission from the music publishing companies must be obtained to reprint lyrics or music.

Seating:

- Candidates are to sit together in the front of the church.
- If a candidate or sponsor has special needs, every effort should be made to have him/her seated with his/her appropriate group.

Readings and Petitions:

- Readings are to be proclaimed from the Lectionary only. (No loose-leaf binders, missalettes, or photocopies are to be used.)
- If a deacon is not present, the lector or one of the newly confirmed may read the General Intercessions; but only one person should read them, unless they are proclaimed in different languages.

Concluding Rites:

- The newly confirmed are to remain in their places until the Archbishop processes down the aisle.
- The newly confirmed may leave in procession following the ministers, or they may remain in their pews and leave with the rest of the congregation.

Specific Information Regarding the Rite of Confirmation

Presentation of Candidates:

After the Gospel, the Archbishop is seated. The Pastor or his delegate presents the candidates for Confirmation. The candidates stand. (Candidates may be presented individually or as a group.) They remain standing until the Archbishop instructs them to be seated. The homily follows.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises:

The candidates stand. They are the only ones who renew their Baptismal promises.

Laying on of Hands

The Archbishop and concelebrants pray over the candidates.

Anointing with Chrism:

The Sponsor places his/her right hand on the candidate's right shoulder during the Rite of Confirmation.

The candidate, sponsor or pastor announces the Confirmation name of the candidate.

The Archbishop anoints the candidate with chrism and says, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The candidate responds, "Amen."

The Archbishop concludes by saying, "Peace be with you."

The candidate responds by saying, "And also with you."

Confirmation Liturgy Planning Guidelines

Included in the letter from the Archbishop to the pastor is a Confirmation Liturgy Planning Form. If there are any questions concerning the planning of the Confirmation Liturgy, please contact the Archbishop's office.

The following are points that the parish Liturgy Planning Team should consider:

Altar Servers

If possible, five altar servers should be present, as well as a deacon.

Entrance / Seating:

Will candidates enter in procession?

Will sponsors enter in procession?

Sprinkling or Penitential Rite

Choose either a Sprinkling Rite or a Penitential Rite – not both.

Scripture Readings:

- If Confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter; on any day within the Octaves of Christmas and Easter; or on a Solemnity, the readings of the day must be used.
- If Confirmation falls on any other day, the Mass of Confirmation will be used and the readings are to be selected from the Lectionary for the Ritual Mass of Confirmation.

Music During Rite of Confirmation

Music (either songs or instrumental pieces) must accompany the anointing. It is suggested that several selections be chosen depending upon the number of candidates to be anointed.

Presentation of Gifts:

Only the gifts of bread and wine are to be presented. (If the celebration of Confirmation occurs on a Sunday, the collection would also be presented.)

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

What's next? – The Time After Confirmation

The Church reminds us that there is a final period of post-sacramental catechesis or mystagogy. This is a time for the newly confirmed to “*grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity.*” (RCIA #244)

Mystagogy is a time during which the participants communally reflect on the graces they have received to date, receive assistance to transition into the “general population” of the church, and discern ways by which they will live out their new faith commitments.

This Post-Confirmation time will be a critical period as they will soon be in the 18+ age group when more than half of young Catholics become inactive. It is essential to help them find ways to become immersed in the life of the Church. We may assist the confirmandi in:

1. “*deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery*” by encouraging them to
 - a. participate more fully in the sacred Liturgy, especially the Triduum
 - b. become members of a small faith sharing group that focuses on the Sunday lectionary readings and how to apply them to our daily lives
 - c. frequently participate in Lenten Stations of the Cross
 - d. practice personal prayer fervently and faithfully
2. “*meditating on the Gospel*” by encouraging them to
 - a. join a Bible Study Group
 - b. regularly pray *lectio divina* alone or in a group
 - c. reflect on the Sunday readings (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/>)
3. “*sharing in the Eucharist*” by encouraging them to
 - a. attend Mass regularly on Sundays, holy days and other occasions
 - b. volunteer for liturgical ministries, such as lector, usher, or music ministry
 - c. attend holy hours, adoration and benediction
4. “*doing the works of charity*” by encouraging them to
 - a. stay involved in service opportunities in the parish, school or community
 - b. volunteer to join the SEARCH Retreat Team or Parish Retreat Team
 - c. volunteer to be a catechist in the parish religious education program
 - d. continue learning about the lives of the Saints (www.americancatholic.org)
 - e. stay active in their parish Youth Ministry Group

Every year on the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time the United States Catholic Church celebrates World Youth Day. Pope John Paul II began this tradition in 1985 and Pope Benedict continues the tradition. This Sunday is a good time to recognize all of the teens of the parish and recognize all of the service they provide throughout the year. (www.vatican.va/gmg; www.usccb.org/wyd; www.nfcym.org/resources/WYD_US)

Practical Suggestions for Directing Your Parish Formation Program

Reflecting On & Evaluating Your Confirmation Formation Program

Whether your Confirmation Formation program is new or has been in place for many years, it is a good practice to evaluate your program from time to time. In addition to evaluating your program at the end of the year, it may be helpful to evaluate certain events, such as parent/candidate sessions, retreats, interviews, etc., soon after they take place. Below are some questions you might want to consider when evaluating your program.

Overall Program

- Were the following topics adequately reviewed during the formation program?
 - The purpose and effects of the Sacrament
 - The gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - The significance of choosing a Confirmation name
- Were the teens exposed to different forms of prayer?
- Did the program emphasize the faith formation of the teens and not simply the memorization of text?
- Do the teens understand the Rite of Confirmation including the signs and symbols?
- Was there adequate time to prepare the teens?

Meetings, Gatherings, and Activities

- Were all of the meetings/events publicized well in advance?
- Was overall attendance a problem?
 - With teens?
 - With parents?
 - With sponsors? (if applicable)
 - Why?
- Were there enough options for families/sponsors and teens to participate in the program?
- Were the interviews helpful to the teens and to the interviewers? Did the teens feel welcomed, respected and affirmed?
- Was your schedule convenient for the majority of the teens and their parents?
- Do you need to offer other options or formats such as weekends or perhaps another evening during the week?

Retreats/Spiritual Experiences

- Were there enough options for retreats/spiritual experiences available?
- Were the goals of each retreat/spiritual experience met?
- Was the number of retreats/spiritual experiences adequate? Were there too many?

- When thinking about the retreats/spiritual experiences...
 Were the leaders prepared?
 Was there enough spirituality, prayer time, and quiet reflection time?
 Was there enough of a balance between small groups, large group talks,
 quiet time, games, skits, etc.?
 Were there enough volunteers?

Service/Apprenticeship

- Did the service component focus on quality rather than quantity?
- Do the teens now have a servant mentality?
- Were teens' service experiences undertaken with a larger group (possibly with other teens, family members, or parishioners) or was the service undertaken alone? Were there enough opportunities to experience both types of service?
- Were the families of the teens involved in the service experience?
- Was there a good balance between parish and community service?
- Were the teens prepared before the service and was there reflection after their service experience?
- Was there an opportunity for the teens to process and share their service experience?

Developing an Evaluation Form

The purpose of reflecting on and evaluating your program is to use the feedback to improve your Confirmation Formation Program.

You can develop a short one-page evaluation sheet to give to your Confirmation Formation staff/volunteers and/ or to the teens and their parents to get their feedback.

Three sample evaluation forms – one for your staff, one for the teens and one for parents – are provided in Appendix B.

Another option is to use is an on-line evaluation service such as *Survey Monkey* (www.surveymonkey.com). The basic service on *Survey Monkey* is free and the set up and design of the survey is quite easy yet very flexible.

Appendix A – Confirmation Program Textbooks and Resources

The *primary* textbooks used in the Archdiocese of Mobile for Confirmation must appear on the USCCB's "Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series". This listing is updated frequently and can be found on-line at:

www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf

To check the conformity of a specific Confirmation text, scroll down the list until you come to the heading "Sacramental Preparation Materials". The *primary* texts used in your program must appear on this list.

Note: Only published textbooks and series are reviewed by the US Bishops for conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Other types of resources may not be eligible for review. "The fact that a given item does not appear on the Subcommittee's 'Conformity List' does not necessarily mean that it has been reviewed and found to be deficient, or that the publisher has failed to submit it." (*The Conformity of Catechetical Materials with the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Criteria and Applicability*, USCCB, January 2010) Other quality materials that are not on the conformity list may be used as *supplementary* resources to your Confirmation Formation program.

The Office of Religious Education has samples of almost all of the texts listed on the conformity list. To review a text, please call the ORE.

Appendix B – Sample Forms

Sample Confirmation Registration Form	App B-ii
Sample Sponsor Agreement and Information Form	App B-iii
Sample Evaluation Form for Confirmation Team	App B-iv
Sample Evaluation Form for Parents	App B-vi
Sample Evaluation Form for Teens	App B-vii

Sample Confirmation Registration Form

_____ Parish

Information on this form is held in confidence and is not shared without your permission.

Today's Date: _____

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

First: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____

Date of Birth: __/__/____ Age: _____ Place of Birth: _____
(include city, state and country)

Name of Father: _____

Name of Mother: _____

Teen lives with: _____
(if different than above)

Full Mailing Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

II. RELIGIOUS HISTORY

1. Where were you baptized? _____
(include church name, city, state)

2. Date of your baptism: _____

3. Check all other sacraments you have already received:

Penance (Confession)

First Communion

III. SPONSOR

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Sample Sponsor Agreement and Information Form

Date: _____ Candidate Name: _____

Sponsor Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Place of Birth: _____

Sponsor's Parish: _____

To be a sponsor, I realize that I must:

1. have the qualifications and the intention of performing this role;
2. have completed the sixteenth year of age;
3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist;
4. be an active, practicing Catholic;
5. be receiving the sacraments of Penance and Communion frequently;
6. be married in the Catholic Church, if married;
7. lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
8. plan to maintain an ongoing relationship with the candidate in order to promote the candidate's lifelong spiritual growth.

I declare that I am living consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and that I will be a long-term spiritual guide and mentor for my candidate.

Sponsor's signature _____ Date _____

Sample Evaluation Form for Confirmation Team

Meetings, Gatherings, and Activities

Were there enough options for families/sponsors and teens to participate in the program?

Were the interviews helpful to the interviewers? Did the teens feel welcomed, respected and affirmed?

Was the program schedule convenient for all of the teens and their parents?

Formation

Catechetical Formation

Do the teens understand the purpose and effects of the sacrament of Confirmation?

Do the teens understand the effects of the Gifts of the Spirit in their lives?

Do the teens understand the Rite of Confirmation including the signs and symbols of the rite?

Prayer/Spirituality Formation

Were the teens exposed to a variety of prayer forms?

Were there enough options for retreats/spiritual experiences available?

Were the goals of each retreat/spiritual experience met?

Justice Formation

Did the service component focus on the service experience rather than the number of service hours?

Do the teens have a servant mentality?

Were the families of the teens involved in the service experience?

Was there a good balance between parish and community service?

Were the teens allowed to discuss the need for service prior to and after their service experience?

Was there an opportunity for the teens to process and share their service experience?

Sample Evaluation Form for Parents

Meetings, Gatherings, and Activities

Were the meetings and events for our program publicized well in advance?

Were there enough gathering options for families/sponsors and teens to participate in the program?

Was the program schedule convenient for you and your teen?

Confirmation Formation

Do you believe that your teen was adequately prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Have you seen a change in your teen's prayer life?

Has your teen's attitude towards service changed?

Were there enough options for retreats/spiritual experiences available?

What did your teen like most about Confirmation Formation?

What improvements would you suggest for the Confirmation Formation program?

Sample Evaluation Form for Teens

Meetings, Gatherings, and Activities

Did you have enough advance notice about all of our activities for Confirmation?

Did the Confirmation program activities fit into your schedule?

What changes, if any, should we make in the scheduling of activities for next year's class?

Confirmation Formation

Did the Confirmation program help to make any changes in your life?

Has your prayer life changed over the past two years?

What kind of service activities do you plan to do in the future?

What was the best part about our Confirmation program?

What improvements would you suggest for the Confirmation Formation program?

Appendix C – Outlines for Gatherings

Suggested Guidelines for Initial Parent & Candidate Meeting	App C-ii
Parent, Sponsor and Candidate Gatherings	
Model I: Gatherings in Presentation Style	App C-iv
Model II: Gatherings as Sacramental Catechesis	App C-v
Model III: Lectio Divina	App C-vii

Suggested Guidelines for Initial Parent & Candidate Meeting

Before the preparation program begins, it is important that you meet with the candidates and the parents to discuss your parish program. At this meeting, share with your families the two-year calendar, the documents that they will need to fill out or produce, the regulations regarding their selection of a sponsor and any other details or requirements for your parish program.

Calendar:

Even if you are not able to give set dates for every activity for the two-year formation period, you need to give an overview of what activities will be expected of those in your program.

- For those receiving catechetical instruction through the parish, instruct them on how to register for the program and when the classes are held. Are there any expectations regarding attendance?
- For those who attend Catholic School, will any proof of school registration be required?
- If your parish program includes interviews, retreats, service activities, or other gathered activities, review what will be expected of the candidates and options offered, if any.

Documents:

Unless the candidate was baptized at the parish where Confirmation is requested, the candidate will need to produce his/her original Baptismal Certificate (or a certified copy) so that it can be copied and kept for parish records. It is important to give an early due date for the certificate so that there is enough time to deal with possible problems in procuring the certificate. When asking for Baptismal Certificates from the teens and their parents, explain how to request a Certificate from the baptismal parish.

Possible forms to be distributed at this time include: (see Appendix B for samples)

Confirmation Registration Form
Sponsor Agreement and Information Form
Sponsor Verification Form

Selection of Sponsor:

It is important to review the criteria for choosing a Confirmation sponsor in a pastoral way. At this initial meeting, review the conditions for a sponsor that must be met as outlined in the *Code of Canon Law* (see page 7 of this binder for more information regarding conditions). Teens need to be told why the Church holds these qualifications.

The sponsor information form will help the Confirmation Coordinator ascertain whether or not the sponsor will meet the qualifications required by the Church. If the Confirmation Coordinator believes that there may be a potential problem with

someone's choice of sponsor, the Sponsor Information Sheet should be shared with the pastor so that he can handle the situation (see Canon 874 §1.1).

Parent, Sponsor and Candidate Gatherings

This appendix provides several different outlines for parent, sponsor and candidate gatherings.

Model I provides a simple outline for three presentations on the sacrament of Confirmation that can be used with parents and sponsors along with the candidates.

Model II suggests three catechetical sessions on the Sacraments of Initiation. The sessions include suggestions for song, ritual actions as well as instruction. These may be used for parish adult faith formation along with the parents, sponsors and candidates.

Model III may be used as part of a morning or evening of reflection for the whole parish or the Confirmation community. It is designed as a prayer experience using *lectio divina*.

Model I: Gatherings in Presentation Style

Meeting One: Review of the sacrament of Confirmation

Review of the scriptural roots of Confirmation	CCC # 1286-1289
Review history of the sacrament of Confirmation	CCC # 1290-1292
The place of Confirmation within the Sacraments of Initiation	CCC # 1229-1233, 1241-1242

Meeting Two: Presentation of the Gifts and Graces of the Sacrament

Graces of the sacrament of Confirmation	CCC # 1302-1303
Meaning of character of Confirmation	CCC # 1304-1305
Review of the Gifts of the Spirit	CCC # 1830-1832

Meeting Three: Explanation of the signs, symbols and rite

Anointing	CCC # 1293-1296
Chrism	CCC # 1297-1298
Laying on of hands	CCC # 1299
“Words” used	CCC # 1300
Effects of Confirmation	CCC # 1302-1305

Each of these sessions should involve the parents and sponsors in reflecting on their own celebration of Confirmation, as well as the ways in which the graces of this sacrament have been present in their lives. They may be invited to share with the teens the meaning of the sacrament in their own lives.

Model II: Gatherings as Sacramental Catechesis

The goal of sacramental catechesis is not just information, but transformation. There is a strong conviction that the mysteries which they will celebrate can transform all, and thus signs, Sacred Scripture and rituals are part these celebrations. (RCIA #75) Parents, candidates and, if possible, sponsors should be present for these experiential prayer times.

OUTLINE for the structure of Sacramental Catechesis

1. Gathering Song
2. Greetings and Opening Prayer
3. Liturgy of the Word (the number of readings can vary)
4. Ritual Action (this would also vary with each sacramental celebration i.e.; going to the baptismal font, lighting a candle, smelling the Sacred Chrism, receiving a cross, offering a sign of peace, etc.)
5. Intercessions
6. The Lord's Prayer
7. Closing Prayer
8. Closing Song

Gathering One: Baptism

Gathering and Closing Hymn: might include hymns about faith, oneness, family, water, life.

Prayers might be taken from: Prayer from Ritual for Baptism of Adults or children or from Easter Vigil Liturgy.

Readings might be taken from: Ritual Mass for the Baptism of Adults (RCIA); Ritual for Baptism of Children; Easter Vigil Mass.

Content for homily or talk might be on:

1. Necessity of Baptism (CCC # 1257-1261)
2. Grace of Baptism (CCC # 1262-1274)
3. Signs and ritual of Baptism (CCC # 1234-1243)

Ritual Action might include: Procession to the Font, signing with Baptism water at the Font, lighting small candles from the Easter Candle, and renewing Baptismal promises.

Gathering Two: Confirmation

Gathering and Closing hymn: might be about the Holy Spirit, songs that will be used at Confirmation Mass, songs on being apostles/disciples and service, being sent forth.

Prayers might be taken from: Mass for Pentecost Sunday; Prayers from Mass for Confirmation; Prayers from Votive Mass for the Spread of the Gospel; Prayers from the Easter Season.

Readings might be taken from: Pentecost, Confirmation, Votive Mass for the Spread of the Gospel.

Content for homily or talk might include:

1. Explanation of Confirmation (CCC # 1286-1289)
2. Effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation (CCC # 1302-1305)
3. Signs of the sacrament (CCC # 1297-1301)

Ritual action might include: Smelling the Chrism, lighting a candle, receiving a Bible.

Gathering Three: Eucharist

Gathering and Closing Hymn: might be about Unity, Love of God, Body of Christ.

Prayers might be taken from: Votive Mass of Eucharist, Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Thursday or the Easter Season.

Readings may be taken from: Votive Mass of Eucharist, Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Holy Thursday, Easter Season, John 6 (Ordinary Time, cycle B)

Content for the homily or talk may include:

- Introduction to Eucharist (CCC # 1322-1323)
- Names we call this Sacrament (CCC # 1328-1332)
- The fruit of Holy Communion (CCC # 1391-1401)

Ritual Action might include: Receiving a Bible, baking & sharing from a loaf of bread, signed with the Cross, receiving a small cross, procession with the Book of the Gospels.

Model III: Lectio Divina

Select one of the following or another appropriate reading:

Isaiah 11:1-4	Gifts of the Spirit
Acts 2:1-6	Outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost
Roman 8:14-17	Filled with the Spirit
I Corinthians 12:4-13	One Spirit many gifts
Galatians 5: 16,22-25	Fruits of the Spirit

- 1st Step Silence**
Take time to recognize that you are in the presence of God with a few moments of silence.
- 2nd Step Reading**
Slowly read the passage that was selected seeking to listen with the “ear of your heart” (St. Benedict). Ask, “What does this text say to me?” Select a key word or image. If the group desires, each person can share the word that spoke to them.
- 3rd Step Meditation**
Read the passage again. Pause to think, to ruminate on your word. Like Mary, ponder this word in your heart (Luke 2:19). Allow this word to touch you, and ask, “What does this word mean to me?” If the group desires, each person may be invited to share their word or phrase again.
- 4th Step Background for the Sacred Text**
The Leader can provide clear and simple insights into this Biblical passage before the sharing begins.
- 5th Step Prayer**
Read the passage again. Following a period of silence each is invited to speak, to respond in awe, to give praise or petition to God. We understand that it is the Spirit who prays in our hearts. (Romans 8: 26-27) This sharing is not a discussion, but rather an answer to what this word makes me say to my God.
- 6th Step Contemplation**
Now allow God to speak to you in your heart. After a period of silence conclude by all uniting in praying the Lord’s Prayer.

Appendix D – Adolescent Catechesis Resource

Adolescent Catechesis

Religious Instruction at the High School Level

(This section is provided within this binder as a reference for the Confirmation Coordinator. It is important that the Confirmation Coordinator be aware of the larger Adolescent Catechesis program which should be in place for the teens in Catholic school, home school and parish programs.)

Faith formation is a life-long process: from cradle to grave. Consistent, formal catechetical instruction should take place during all twelve years of a young person's formal education years.

Adolescent Catechesis is the term for religious instruction during the high school years, whether this takes place in a Catholic School, in a parish program or in a home school setting.

Confirmation Formation is separate from, and in addition to, Adolescent Catechesis and only occurs in a parish.

Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age

Background Information

The Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) developed the document *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* and it was approved by the full body of the USCCB in November of 2007.

The Framework was designed to guide catechetical instruction for teens in Catholic high schools, in parish Adolescent Catechesis programs and in home-schooling programs. It outlines the topics of instruction to be covered during the 9th-12th grades.

In January of 2010, the same committee developed an adaptation of this document for use in parish and youth ministry programs. This adaptation

streamlined the original document so that it would be easier for parishes to implement.

Purpose

It is the intent of the US bishops that this Framework be adopted by all of the dioceses of the US to provide a national uniformity. This national uniformity in “catechetical instruction on the high-school-age level would be a benefit in the modern mobile society.” (*Doctrinal Elements*, pg. 1)

The bishops developed this framework to offer guidance to catechetical publishers in the creation of instructional material and as an aid to “those responsible for overseeing catechetical instruction” and curriculum development (or assessment instruments) in dioceses. (taken from *Doctrinal Elements*, pg. 1)

It is recommended that each parish have copies of both the “Doctrinal Elements” and the “Adaptation” documents. It is important to study both documents prior to designing the parish program.

Further Information

The full texts of the *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework* and the *Adaptation* can be found on-line:

Doctrinal Elements: <http://www.usccb.org/education/framework.pdf>

Adaptation: <http://www.usccb.org/evangelization/Adaptation-of-HS-Curriculum-Framework-Preamble2.pdf>

Curriculum Outline and Sequence

“The Church, in transmitting the faith, ‘does not have a particular method nor any single method,’ and the ‘variety of methods is a sign of life and richness’ as well as a demonstration of respect for those to whom catechesis is addressed (GDC 148). Therefore catechetical materials and programs shaped by this adaptation of the Curriculum Framework will, of necessity, include specific elements of sacramental catechesis, spirituality, retreats, family prayer, popular piety, devotions, and works of charity and justice.” (from the *Adaptation*, pg. 3)

The Framework is designed to shape a four-year, eight-semester course of catechetical instruction. It is strongly recommended by the bishops that the six core courses be taught in the order listed below as each course builds upon the previous courses. Electives can be chosen from the list below with an elective taken in the third and fourth years of instruction, or both can be taken in the fourth year.

Outline of Core Curriculum

The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture

To give students a general knowledge and appreciation of Sacred Scriptures

Who is Jesus Christ?

To introduce students to the mystery of Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity

The Mission of Jesus Christ (The Paschal Mystery)

To help students understand all that God has done for us through his Son, Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ's Mission Continues in the Church

To help students understand that in and through the Church they encounter the living Jesus Christ

Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ

To help students understand that they can encounter Christ today in a full and real way in and through the sacraments, and especially through the Eucharist

Life in Jesus Christ

To help students understand that it is only through Christ that they can fully live out God's plans for their lives.

Elective Curriculum

Sacred Scripture

To give an overview of Sacred Scripture with an introduction to the basic principles for understanding and interpreting the Bible

History of the Catholic Church

To supply the students with a general knowledge of the Church's history from apostolic times to the present

Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society

To introduce students to the Church's social teaching

Responding to the Call of Jesus Christ

To help students to understand the vocations of life: how Christ calls us to live.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Issues

To help students understand the manner in which the Catholic Church relates to non-Catholic Christians as well as to other religions of the world.

Appendix E – Office of Religious Education and Office of Youth Ministry Contact Information

Office of Religious Education

Mobile Office:

Physical Address:

352-A Government St.
Mobile, AL 36602

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 2405
Mobile, AL 36652-2405

Phone: 251-433-6991

Fax: 251-438-6122

Montgomery Office:

2815 Forbes Rd.

Montgomery, AL 36110-1307

Phone: 334-269-2389

Fax: 334-269-2306

Office of Youth Ministry

Mobile Office:

Physical Address:

308 S. Dearborn St.
Mobile, AL 36603

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 40245
Mobile, AL 36640

Phone: 251-433-4138

Fax: 251-432-4801

Montgomery Office:

2815 Forbes Rd.

Montgomery, AL 36110-1307

334-652-8483