

GUIDELINES FOR ADULT CONFIRMATION ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE

The following Guidelines for Adult Confirmation are intended to assist parishes as they plan their confirmation preparation process. The Guidelines are based on the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies and on directives from Archbishop Michael Sheehan regarding confirmation for adults.

I. Who belongs in what program?

- A. Catholics age 18 and under are prepared for confirmation with adolescent/high school candidates.
- B. Catholics age 19 and older are prepared as follows:
 - 1. Catechized adult Catholics are prepared through parish programs designed for adult confirmation candidates.
 - a. These Catholics are characterized by the following:
 - 1. They are baptized and have received First Communion.
 - 2. They are active and participating members of their parishes and highly motivated to celebrate the sacraments.
 - 3. They are aware of the major doctrines and practices of the Catholic faith and are committed to living after the manner of Jesus.
 - b. The parish formation process for these Catholics should fit the needs of the individual. Some people may need a longer period of catechesis and formation before receiving confirmation.
 - c. Baptized Catholics who have received their First Communion should not be placed in the RCIA. Although the catechesis they need may be similar, it is not appropriate for them to participate in the RCIA Rites.
 - 2. Uncatechized adult Catholics are those who have been baptized Catholic but have not received their First Communion. They should participate in the parish RCIA process.
 - 3. The unbaptized and those baptized in other Christian faith traditions participate in the RCIA process.
 - 4. For specific instructions regarding a person who has been baptized in an Eastern Rite (Catholic or Orthodox), contact the Chancellor or a canon lawyer at the Tribunal.

II. What are the canonical issues that impact the celebration of the Sacrament of confirmation for adults?

- A. The following situations either prevent or delay the celebration of confirmation and must be resolved before the Catholic is confirmed (although he/she may certainly participate in the confirmation preparation):
 - 1. Living together but not married
 - 2. Married outside the Church
 - 3. Married outside the Church and in need of an annulment
- B. The celebration of the marriage must take place before people in the situations described above are confirmed.
- C. If someone is divorced and not remarried or not co-habiting, he/she may be confirmed.

III. When/where should adult confirmation take place?

- A. The confirmation of adults takes place in their parish or at the annual archdiocesan celebration of adult confirmation. If the celebration also includes the parish youth Confirmandi, care should be taken to acknowledge both the adults and the youth candidates.
- B. A sufficient period of preparation, depending on the candidates' individual needs is to be provided at the parish level prior to confirmation. *(CIC 890)*
- C. An individual validly baptized in another Christian denomination is **not** a candidate for Adult Confirmation. This individual is a candidate for Reception into full communion within the Catholic Church and celebrates this with a profession of faith, confirmation, and First Eucharist, presided over by the pastor all at the same liturgical celebration *(see Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults, National Statutes on the Catechumenate, #35).*

IV. What should be included in a confirmation preparation process for catechized adult Catholics?

- A. Preparation of catechized adults for celebrating the Sacrament of confirmation consists of ongoing prayer and formation in the Christian way of life. Aspects of this formation should include:
 - 1. Initial interview to determine appropriate formation need *(Not baptized? Uncatechized or catechized? – see B 1 & 2 above)* and invitation to the candidate to be open to continued conversion begun at baptism.
 - 2. Six or more sessions of formation and catechesis, depending on the readiness of the individuals
 - 3. A session for sponsors explaining their role as Christian mentor and guide.
 - 4. An interview to discern readiness
 - 5. A retreat which uses the Rite of Confirmation as the source of prayer and reflection. During this retreat an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be offered.
- B. Sessions should include catechesis and reflection on the following:
 - 1. Sacraments of Initiation, and Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith. *(CSL 10)*
 - 2. Prayer and spirituality
 - 3. Discipleship and Christian living
 - 4. Ministry to the world and to the Church community, including invitation to participate in ministries in which the candidates might be interested
 - 5. Other aspects of Catholic teaching, depending on the needs of the candidates
- C. A session of mystagogy after the celebration of confirmation is essential for reflection on and appropriation of the mystery they just experienced.
- D. Through its vitality the entire parish should assist in the catechesis and formation of its adult confirmation candidates and support them by prayer and example (e.g. prayer partners, hospitality, prayer rituals, mentoring in ministry, etc.).

V. How is it determined whether an adult should be in the RCIA process, a short process of adult confirmation preparation or a longer process of preparation?

- A. Before beginning the process, each candidate brings a current baptism certificate and is interviewed.
- B. The following questions may be discussed during the interview:
 - 1. What is calling you to a deeper relationship with the Lord at this time?
 - 2. What made you decide it was time to celebrate your confirmation?
 - 3. How have you been formed in the Catholic faith up until this time?
 - 4. What was your experience of God as a child in your home? In your parish?
 - 5. How active are you now in the life of the Church, in living your faith in the world?

VI. What are indicators of a person’s readiness for confirmation?

The following are possible indicators of a person’s readiness for confirmation:

- A. A sense that the candidate is sufficiently formed in the Gospel message, Catholic belief and practice, and how to live as a Christian in today’s world;
- B. Commitment to living the rest of one’s life as a follower of Jesus in the Catholic community;
- C. Regular participation in the Church’s worship, pastoral and sacramental life;
- D. Willingness to share one’s time and talent in parish-related ministry or ministry to the world;
- E. Being free canonically free to celebrate the sacrament (see below: canonical issues).

VII. Is confirmation required for marriage in the Church?

- A. It is **not** required that confirmation be celebrated before marriage in the Church, If a person can be adequately prepared to celebrate confirmation before his/her marriage, this should be done. Canon 1065 states: “If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to the sacrament of Marriage.”
- B. If adequate preparation for confirmation is not possible and/or there are other prohibiting factors, the marriage should be celebrated and, as soon as possible after the wedding, the person should continue preparation to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation.

VIII. What are the qualifications to stand as a confirmation sponsor and what is his/her role?

- A. Sponsors must comply with the qualifications included in Canon Law and in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Sacramental Policies and, specifically:
 - 1. Be designated by the one to be confirmed
 - 2. Be at least 16 years old
 - 3. Be a confirmed Catholic who has received the Sacrament of 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 (if married, married in the Church)
 - 5. Not be the father or mother of the one confirmed.
 - 6. Should be only one sponsor for Confirmation, unless the Baptismal Sponsors are chosen.
- B. Sponsors should serve as role models and mentors, helping the candidates to respond to God’s call and live the Christian life in the faith community and the world.
- C. Sponsors must participate in the session for sponsors and the pre-confirmation retreat.

IX. Who is involved in preparing adult Catholics for confirmation?

- A. The Pastor of the parish is responsible for the overall program of formation and preparation of confirmation candidates and sponsors.
- B. The confirmation Coordinator works under the direction of the Pastor or his delegate to coordinate the formation and preparation of adult Catholics.
- C. A skilled interviewer assists in discerning in which process each candidate should be placed.
- D. Certified catechists who are well grounded in their faith and Catholic practice and knowledgeable of Catholic teaching assist with the formation.
- E. The parish offers support for the candidates and provides examples of Catholic life and practice.

X. What documentation and recording are required?

- A. The following documents are required at the beginning of the preparation period and prior to the celebration of confirmation:
 - 1. A current baptismal certificate
 - 2. If the sponsor is from another parish, documentation from the sponsor's parish ascertaining his/her status as a registered practicing Catholic.
 - 3. Affidavit of eligibility signed by the sponsor.
- B. One month prior to the confirmation, each candidate turns into the parish a letter that he/she has written to the Archbishop with answers to the questions he has asked them to address. The parish sends all the letters together to the Archbishop's office.
- C. For Archdiocesan celebrations, Confirmations are to be recorded in the Sacramental books at the parish where the Confirmandi was prepared, not at the parish where the sacrament was given. The parish of preparation is also to send the notification to the parish of Baptism.

XI. When an Archdiocesan celebration of adult confirmation is scheduled, the Office of Worship will provide to each parish all registration information needed for parish participation in the celebration of the sacrament.