



Diocese of Sacramento

Norms for the Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation of Teens

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity. (Catechesi Tradendae, 5)

Sacrament Preparation

- The beginning of any Sacrament Preparation program is Evangelization, introducing students to the person of Jesus Christ and creating opportunities for them to encounter Christ in their daily life. Evangelization is rooted in the presentation of the Gospel message. All Sacrament Preparation programs should present the Gospel message to students and relate the Church's teachings to that message.
- Parents are the primary catechists of their children. Parishes and Catholic schools partner with parents in the formation of their children's faith.
 - It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children the traditional Catholic Prayers. Parishes and Catholic schools will provide parents with the "Prayers to Be Learned" prayer book and reinforce prayers during catechetical sessions
- In addition to helping children have a cognitive, age-appropriate understanding of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, catechetical programs should provide opportunities for spiritual enrichment. Examples of best practices for spiritual enrichment include, but are not limited to, the following: an age-appropriate retreat program, regular use of traditional and spontaneous prayers in class, Stations of the Cross during Lent, recitation of the rosary, opportunities for confession, and Marian celebrations. Children should be provided examples and opportunities to perform the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- Catechists preparing students in the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation must hold a current Basic Catechist Certificate, issued by the Diocese of Sacramento.
- Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is the work of the Parish Team, in cooperation with parents and sponsors. The Parish Team includes, but is not limited to, the following individuals:
 - Pastor/Parochial Administrator, Parochial Vicar, Deacons
 - DRE/CRE
 - Principal (if there is an associated Catholic School)
 - Confirmation Coordinator
 - Liturgy Directory

- Catholic School Teacher (if there is an associated Catholic School)
- Catechists
- Others who have an active role in the formation of students/parents
- Sacrament Preparation Norms Include the Following Categories:
 - Foundational Faith Formation
 - Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament
 - Content for Immediate Preparation
 - Family/Sponsor Catechesis
 - Sponsor
 - Mass Attendance
 - Interviews
 - Service
 - Retreats
 - Fired Up! Confirmation Conference
 - Involvement in the Parish Community

Foundational Faith Formation

- Students are to be encouraged to participate in a lifelong process of faith formation from Kindergarten through High School
- At a minimum, students must participate in two consecutive years of faith formation culminating in the reception of the sacrament.
- Students participate in a foundational faith formation program (whether parish-based, at a Catholic School, or in an approved homeschool program) during these two consecutive years of formation
- During the year in which the sacrament is received, students must also participate in the parish-based Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - Students entering the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation must be in the 7th, 8th or 9th Grade.
 - Students older than 9th Grade, who have not yet been confirmed, are to be admitted to an Immediate Preparation Formation program provided they have one year of foundational formation or youth ministry (with a catechetical component) and are enrolled in the foundational faith formation program for the current year. In parishes where the number of older candidates is sufficient, an “older students” break-out group or class should be formed, as the developmental level of high school students is different from that of middle school students.

- Parishes with Schools within the Diocese of Sacramento should celebrate the sacraments as one parish community with the normative age of students being the same regardless of where foundational faith formation occurs (i.e. parish or Catholic school).
- Foundational Faith Formation programs are to follow a textbook appearing on the USCCB Conformity Review
 - Other materials approved by the Diocese of Sacramento for use in Foundational Faith Formation may be found in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website.
- Foundational Faith Formation Programs are to cover the material appearing on the Religion Standards for the appropriate grade level in which a student is enrolled

Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament

- The Immediate Preparation process for the Sacrament of Confirmation is the responsibility of the parish pastor. In parishes with a Catholic School, the pastor should ensure that the catechesis is well coordinated between the Catholic School and the Faith Formation program. Students in both programs should have sufficient opportunities to develop a common identity as fellow disciples of Jesus.
- Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation occurs at the parish-level. Students enrolled in the Catholic School or an approved homeschool program will receive their foundational formation through the school or homeschool program, but will join the parish for the immediate preparation events, including, but not limited to: Confirmation retreat, Parent/Sponsor Sessions, group service project(s), Fired Up! Confirmation Conference, rehearsal for Confirmation.
- Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is to occur over a period of no fewer than 12 weeks prior to the reception of the Sacrament and contain no fewer than 12-contact hours.
 - Immediate Preparation may be integrated into the foundational faith formation program in which the candidate is already enrolled
 - Up to 6 hours of Immediate Preparation may be completed as part of the Parent/Sponsor Sessions in which students also participate.
 - The Confirmation Retreat, Fired Up! Confirmation Conference, and the Rehearsal for Confirmation are in addition to the 12-contact hours.
- Immediate Preparation may occur in both gathered and non-gathered formats. Sponsors and candidates should be encouraged to meet outside of the scheduled formation sessions throughout the immediate preparation process.

- Parishes may assist in this interaction by offering suggestions for activities, discussion and projects that sponsors and candidates complete together.

Content for Immediate Preparation

- The Content for Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is based upon the “Sacramental Preparation Protocol III, Confirmation,” from the USCCB.
- Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation should include the following topics:
 - Sacraments of Initiation
 - Essential Elements, Effects and Minister of the Sacrament of Baptism
 - Essential Elements, Effects, Requirements for Reception and Minister of the Sacrament of the Eucharist
 - Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
 - Essential Elements, Effects, Requirements for Reception and Minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - An Understanding of the Rite of Confirmation
 - Liturgical Signs and Symbols
 - Candidate Responses
 - Purpose of Sponsor
 - Role of the Family and the Community
 - Call to Discipleship
 - Living as a member of the Body of Christ (the universal Church)
 - Within the parish context
 - Within the general community
 - Within your immediate sphere of influence (eg. family, friends, and schoolmates)
 - Vocational Discernment
 - Role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Trinity
 - Familiarity with the names and application of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit.
- Parishes are encouraged to select an Immediate Preparation text that appears on the USCCB Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series
 - Other materials approved by the Diocese of Sacramento for use in Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation may be found in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis’ website.

Parent/Sponsor Sessions

- Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation should involve the entire family and the sponsor.
- Immediate preparation must include at least 4-6 hours of catechesis that involves the parents and sponsors.
 - Parishes are left to their own discretion as to the structure of these parent/sponsor sessions.
 - The first Parent/Sponsor session must include formation that helps them understand their role in the formation process and their role in the life of the candidate both pre- and post-Confirmation.
 - At least 2-3 hours must include catechesis with the parents, sponsors, and students together.
 - Parishes may structure their Immediate Preparation for Confirmation such that the candidates are involved in the entire 4-6 hours of catechesis involving the parents and sponsors.
 - The Parent/Sponsor sessions that involve the students apply to the 12-hour requirement for the Immediate Preparation of the student.
- Sample Parent, Sponsor and Candidate Sessions are included in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website.

Sponsor

- Requirements for a Sponsor (Canon 874.1)
 - Designated by the one to be confirmed
 - Not be a parent of the candidate
 - Have the qualifications and intention of performing this role
 - Have completed the 16th year of age
 - Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist
 - Not bound by any canonical impediment
 - Be an active, practicing Catholic, receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist regularly
 - If married, married in the Catholic Church
 - Lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken
- Recommendations for a Sponsor
 - Individuals who live locally and will have a continued presence in the life of the candidate are recommended.
 - If candidates choose a sponsor who is not local, parishes should assign a “mentor” from the parish who will journey with the candidate through the Immediate Preparation

- Sponsors should be involved in the formation of the candidate both during formation sessions and outside interaction with the candidate
 - The role of the sponsor is to journey with the candidate throughout his/her formation process and life. As such, a relationship should exist and continue both in formal gatherings at the parish and informal activities in everyday life.
- Sponsors are to be selected by the candidate prior to the beginning of the Immediate Preparation process for Confirmation. All required documentation should be provided to the Confirmation Coordinator and/or parish staff prior to this time.
 - Sponsors from outside the parish in which the candidate is being confirmed are to provide a letter from their pastor indicating they meet the criteria for being a sponsor.
- Sample Sponsor Forms are included in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website

Mass Attendance

- Our Liturgy is the source and summit of our faith. Per Canon 1247, the faithful are obligated to participate in Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. As such, candidates in the preparation process for the sacrament of Confirmation are to attend Mass on a weekly basis.
 - The Sacrament preparation process should instill this essential Christian practice and have the expectation it will be fulfilled
- Activities that invite students to reflect on the Mass and share with parents, sponsors and/or classmates should be encouraged.

Interviews

- Parish teams are to interview each candidate at the beginning of the second year of foundational faith formation to determine his/her readiness for entering the Immediate Preparation process, as well as areas of formation to be emphasized during the final months of preparation.
- Interviews are to be designed to be non-threatening to the student and may also include the parents of the candidate.
- During the Initial interview at the beginning of the second year of foundational faith formation, parish teams are to talk with candidates and their parents about the selection of a sponsor for Confirmation. The requirements for a sponsor are to be reviewed and discussed with the candidate to ensure that the candidate has an approved sponsor selected by the time the Immediate Preparation process begins.
- Parishes are encouraged to interview each candidate prior to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation to discern readiness for the

reception of the sacrament, answer any final questions the candidate may have and offer an opportunity for feedback on the preparation process.

- Sample Interview questions are included in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website.

Service

- During the Immediate Preparation process for Confirmation, students are to participate in two full-day service projects.
 - One of the service projects is to be organized by the parish and involve a group of Confirmation candidates.
 - Parishes may elect to organize a single service project for the candidates, a group of projects on the same day where candidates select the project that fits their gifts and talents, or offer several opportunities on different days from which the students may select their preferred service project and date.
 - A second service project is to be completed by the candidate and his/her family and sponsor.
 - Parishes may offer a list of recommended/suggested service projects or organizations for families to contact
- Service projects are to involve students in the community and offer interaction with other individuals.
- Each service project is to be followed by a period of reflection on the project, its connection to our Catholic Social Teaching and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and the way their service impacted other individuals
- Sample Reflection Questions are included in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website.

Retreat

- Candidates for Confirmation are to participate in a full-day Confirmation retreat sponsored by the parish or a group of parishes. Parishes are strongly recommended to offer candidates the opportunity to participate in a full-weekend (overnight) retreat.
 - This retreat is in addition to the 12-contact hours of Immediate Preparation for the sacrament and participation in Fired Up! Confirmation Conference.
- Parishes may write their own Confirmation retreat, engage the Diocesan Retreat Team or other retreat teams/organizations such as NET or contract with a retreat center, such as St. Joseph Mareello Retreat Center,

Christ the King Retreat Center or Mercy Center to offer the retreat to their students.

- Smaller parishes are encouraged to join together to offer a single retreat for a regional area
- The Confirmation Retreat is designed to deepen the spiritual life of the students; it is not an extended catechetical session. Students should have the opportunity for personal prayer, reconciliation and Mass during the retreat. Talks and activities should focus on the spiritual development of the candidate and their role of living as a disciple of Christ and discerning their path. The retreat is also an opportunity for building community among the candidates.
- Sample Retreats are included in the Appendix to this document and on the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis' website.

Fired Up! Confirmation Conference

- All parishes and schools are expected to attend Fired Up! Confirmation Conference bringing their candidates who will receive the sacrament of Confirmation that year.
- Fired Up is typically held on a Saturday and Sunday in late February or early March. Students attend one of the two days and must be a part of a parish/school group attending.
 - Dates for Fired Up are made available as soon as they are finalized in the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, typically in late May for the following year. Registration for Fired Up typically opens in late May or June. The location of the conference rotates among the Catholic High Schools in Sacramento.

Involvement in the Parish Community

- As a part of the Immediate Preparation for Confirmation, candidates are to be actively involved in the Parish Community. Involvement in the Parish Community is not to be confused with the Service Project opportunities.
- The Parish Team should encourage, announce and invite candidates and families to participate in parish-wide activities.
- Involvement in the Parish Community is designed to prepare students for being active members of the parish community following their Confirmation.
- Students are to be introduced to various ministries within the parish and encouraged to participate in them throughout their formation and post-Confirmation.

- This can be achieved by inviting leaders of various parish ministries to talk to students during a formation session and invite them to become involved.

Confirmation Preparation Process

Activity	People Involved	Time
Foundational Faith Formation	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 consecutive years, culminating in the reception of the sacrament
Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament **	Students/Parents/Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 12 hours (2-3 hours must involve parents/sponsors)
Parent/Sponsor Formation **	Parents/Sponsors/Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 hours (2-3 hours must involve students)
Interviews	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning of Second Year of Foundational Faith Formation (required) • Immediately prior to reception of sacrament (encouraged)
Service	Students/Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full-day project organized by the parish for a group of candidates • 1 full-day project with family/sponsor
Retreat	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full-day (required) Weekend/Overnight recommended
Fired Up! Confirmation Conference	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 full day

** Parent/Sponsor Formation that also involves the students fulfills hours for both the Immediate Preparation for the Sacrament and Parent/Sponsor Formation