

VIII. CONFIRMATION DIRECTIVES

A. CONFIRMATION BY THE BISHOP

The bishop confers the Sacrament of Confirmation on:

1. Youth who normally will have participated in a regular program of religious education and celebrated the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist;
2. Adults who are practicing Catholics but missed confirmation earlier in life.

B. CONFIRMATION CANDIDATE

1. Within the scope of these directives, and without prejudice to future modification in this matter, candidates for confirmation in the Diocese of Salt Lake City will normally have attained the eighth grade. Every young person should have been confirmed before completion of the eleventh grade.

2. It is required that candidates for confirmation participate in a sustained and comprehensive program of preparation that includes doctrinal formation in faith, spiritual and liturgical formation, and active involvement in the parish community through service projects.

3. In order to underline the unity of baptism and confirmation, a special confirmation name is no longer required. However, a confirmation name may be chosen. To emphasize the association of the sacraments of initiation with the whole communion of saints, it is proper that the confirmation name be that of a saintly or venerable Christian.

4. Confirmation candidates should be prepared to participate fully in the confirmation liturgy. They should be prepared to renew their baptismal promises, respond to the bishop during the rite of confirmation, and to be fully attentive to the Eucharistic liturgy, culminating in the reception of Holy Communion.

C. OTHER DIRECTIVES

There are other directives for parents and sponsors regarding sacramental education, formation, and the confirmation liturgy available from the Office of the Bishop. Among these directives, the following are noted:

1. Parents may not be sponsors for their children at confirmation. Sponsorship represents a role distinct from that of Christian parenthood.
2. To act as sponsor, a person must be a Catholic who has celebrated all the sacraments of initiation, lives a life consistent with the role being undertaken, have the intention of fulfilling the role in a serious and conscientious manner, and not be under any impediment of Canon law.

3. Since the role of sponsor involves maturity and wisdom in matters of faith, sponsors must be at least sixteen years of age (although a pastor may, for an adequate reason allow exceptions.)

4. It is expected that all Confirmandi and their sponsors be dressed appropriately for this sacred celebrations. Confirmation stoles are not to be given. The stole is the proper vesture of ordained ministers.

6. Unless a parish has an annual class of 25 or more candidates, confirmation should be scheduled in alternate years. If there are reasons to the contrary, an exception can be requested from the bishop.

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7. Confirmation candidates are to stand for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Either a card, a name tag, or verbal introduction of the candidate may be used to indicate the confirmation name, for the bishop.

8. For Communion there should be two ministers of the cup for every minister of the ciborium of the Body of Christ. When it is not possible to observe this guideline, only the Body of Christ should be distributed to the congregation.

D. PRIEST ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1. Adults

a) The confirmation of adults (previously unbaptized) properly takes place in the context of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and is subject to the directives relevant to that process. Their confirmation is not to be postponed until the next visit by the bishop.

b) Validly baptized non-Catholic Christians from other than the Orthodox churches are confirmed during the Easter Vigil, when they are received formally into full communion in the Roman Catholic Church.

2. Baptized Catholics never catechized

Regarding the confirmation of baptized Catholics who were never evangelized or catechized, a distinction must be made:

a) For those who seek full reception into the Catholic Church after having been an apostate from the faith, proper preparation must be provided in order to insure the adequacy of their faith commitment. Those who seek full communion into the Catholic Church who, without fault of their own, were not properly instructed, or who were raised in a non-Catholic religion, are to receive adequate instruction in order to insure their proper understanding of the sacraments.

b) If a Catholic is part of the RCIA process and if the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist takes place at the Easter Vigil, the local pastor enjoys the faculties to administer the sacraments.

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c) If a Catholic desires to receive the sacrament of Confirmation for other reasons (i.e. marriage purposes), the local pastor must request delegation from the bishop to properly administer the sacrament. The proper preparation of the candidate is always required.

d) A priest may not confirm (without faculty from the bishop) a baptized Catholic who without his or her fault never put the faith into practice (was unevangelized and uncatechized) but had not apostatized or been instructed in a non-Catholic religion.

e) In this circumstance, priests may be granted the faculty to confirm, if the Catholic is part of the Catechumenate process and if the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist takes place at the Easter Vigil. A request for the faculty to confirm should be sent to the bishop in writing, listing the name(s) of the Catholic(s) involved.

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This does not apply to “evangelized and catechized” Catholics who simply missed confirmation. Someone who received First Penance and First Communion would be considered as minimally evangelized and catechized. These are to be confirmed by the bishop during the annual celebration of confirmation at the Cathedral on the Vigil of Pentecost.

3. Children Baptized after the Age of Reason

As prescribed by the National Statutes for the Catechumenate the confirmation of children baptized after they have reached catechetical age (age of reason) also follows the catechumenate process and takes place during the Easter Vigil and is celebrated by the parish priest.

“Since children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852:1), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens.” (NSC 18).

Parents, pastors and/or catechists are not permitted to require that their Confirmation be delayed because of their age.

4. Infants in danger of death

Infants who are baptized when they are in danger of death are to be confirmed at the same time, if the baptism is celebrated by a priest.

IX. FIRST CONFESSION AND FIRST COMMUNION DIRECTIVES

A. Children are to be catechized and properly prepared for First Penance before they receive First Communion. Meaningful parental involvement in this preparation is essential. While in an individual case the parents could decide that their child is not ready to receive First Penance prior to First Communion, such should be an exceptional and infrequent case.

A child unready for First Penance would normally be considered unready for First Communion.

B. The catechetical emphasis for children preparing for First Penance and First Communion should be directed not only to the celebration of their First Confession and First Communion but also to a lifetime of active participation in the sacramental life of the Church. (This is especially important in the classes for parents.)

C. First Penance and First Communion are to be received at the age of reason, usually seven years old (second grade.)

D. Careful consideration needs to be given in the case of children and other persons who are developmentally disabled, that they not be unduly deprived of the benefit of the sacraments.