

# DIocese of Newark Confirmation Policy

*(as developed by the Bishop's office in partnership with the Christian Formation Commission)*

*"In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature and public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop."* BCP, p. 412

The following guidelines are to assist the congregations in the Diocese of Newark in preparing candidates for Confirmation. The core curriculum for such preparation is our Baptismal Covenant. It is important to balance learning about the Episcopal Church and an Anglican expression of our Christian faith with putting one's faith into practice. This cannot be accomplished quickly which is why we ask for a two-year process to begin building this educational, emotional and spiritual readiness. Candidates presented for Confirmation must be in the eighth grade or older.

Having started their preparation in the sixth grade, candidates will be given time to form the requisite maturity and understanding of that to which they are being asked to commit. The involvement of role models, mentors and their community of faith form an essential part of the environment that helps the candidates grow and shape their ideas around commitment and responsibility. It is, therefore, important to wait until an appropriate age when the individual may clearly express his/her own desire to affirm their faith and their commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism.

It is during the years from twelve to sixteen that individuals work out their identity and it is to be hoped that their life in the community of the church during that time will have prepared them to decide to assume mature responsibility for their faith. It also allows them to wrestle with theology and grow into the emotional and spiritual maturity required to make this intentional proclamation of faith and intentional commitment to the Episcopal Church.

## Guidelines for Confirmation Preparation

Confirmation is "[t]he sacramental rite in which the candidates "express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop". (BCP, p. 860) The following guidelines are to assist our congregations and all who bear the responsibility of helping our youth make a "mature commitment" to the Christian faith in our Episcopal tradition in preparing candidates for Confirmation.

- Candidates for Confirmation must be in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or older.
- Preparation should be a minimum of one academic year or 40 hours with a preference for two years of preparation which would include opportunities for on-going formation as suggested below.
- The congregation should take an active role in supporting the Confirmands through prayer, recognition and mentoring.
- The Rite of Confirmation is held after Easter.

## Required Activities

- Attendance at all confirmation classes with a specified number of excused absences.
- Mission/Outreach: making your faith real by answering Christ's command to love one another (ex: 8 hours of service or 3 projects).
- Worship: mandatory attendance at specified services, especially Principal Feasts and Holy Days.
- Community-based Education: have regular faith conversations with parents/guardians/mentors; have some homework assignments that are completed together with parents/guardians/mentors; have the vestry and confirmands share a meal.
- Diocesan Confirmation Retreat:
  - Youth confirmands are encouraged to attend one of the three retreats with other members of their congregation and district. The confirmands will meet with the Bishop, participate in a Ministry Fair and other activities to foster faith formation.
  - Adult confirmands attend the retreat Saturday afternoon only for lunch and conversation with the Bishop. This time is used for fellowship and reflection with the Bishop and their peers.

## Content

The following guidelines reflect the minimum knowledge/information content to be discussed with the Confirmands.

### Bible

- Bible "mechanics" (usage)
- Table of Contents
- Difference between Old Testament and New Testament
- Key biblical figures
- Historical timeline

### Book of Common Prayer

- Binding characteristics of our tradition
- Creeds and Psalms
- Baptism and the Baptismal Covenant
- The Daily and Pastoral Offices
- The Holy Eucharist
- Prayers and Thanksgivings

### Sacraments

- Catechistic definition; identify what they are and how administered.
- Be able to find appropriate services in the Book of Common Prayer.

### Christian Identity

- The life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how it relates to our lives
- Brief history of Christianity
- What it means to be an Episcopalian (scripture, tradition, reason)
- Real life issues and how to deal with them as a Christians (ethics)

- Knowledge of liturgical seasons and practices (ex: Lenten discipline, Advent Quiet Day, visit to United Nations for Pentecost)

## **Prayer**

- Explore ways of praying
- Examine *Prayers and Thanksgivings* in BCP, p. 810-841

## **Ministry**

- What it means that ALL are ministers; involvement in ministry within the church (BCP, p. 855)
- Connection between God-given gifts and service in God's name - Discernment of personal ministry
- Post-confirmation involvement in congregational life

## **Appendix**

Sample Youth Covenant  
Sample Parent Covenant

✠ (church name) ✠

## *Parent Confirmation Covenant*

As the parent(s), guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, I recognize the importance of this special time of preparation for Confirmation. I understand that this is a process of discernment in which my child will:

- seek a closer relationship with God and with his/her peers in the group
- develop a better understanding of the Episcopal Church
- reach a personal decision as to whether or not s/he wants to confirm his/her faith

I intend to stand with my daughter/son throughout this graced time in her/his life. Therefore, to the best of my ability and with God's help I will:

- Support her/him in her/his faith journey through encouragement in word and deed.
- Set an example of committed Christian discipleship and service.
- Attend church services with my family and facilitate my child's attendance at worship.
- Continue to pray for openness to the Holy Spirit in my life and in the life of my child seeking confirmation.
- Ensure that my child attends all of the components of the confirmation preparation process including:

*Attendance at church worship services on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Easter.*

*Sunday evening class sessions*

*One service activity during the course of the confirmation prep*

*One overnight retreat - (dates to be determined)*

*Diocesan confirmation at \_\_\_\_\_*

on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Parent(s), Guardian(s) of Confirmation Candidate*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



(church name)



# *Student Confirmation Covenant*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognize the importance of this special time of preparation for Confirmation. I understand that this is a process of discernment in which I will:

- *seek a closer relationship with God and with my peers in the group*
- *develop a better understanding of the Episcopal Church*
- *reach a personal decision as to whether or not I want to confirm my faith*

In order to accomplish this, to the best of my ability and with God's help, I will:

*Attend church worship services on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and Easter.*

*Attend all Sunday evening class sessions*

*Accomplish one service activity during the course of the confirmation prep*

*Participate in one overnight retreat – (dates to be determined)*

*Attend the Diocesan confirmation at \_\_\_\_\_ on*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*