

WHAT IS READINESS?

When speaking of the readiness of a child to celebrate a sacrament, there are three areas to address: the family, the individual, and the parish community.

Family: primary place of child's formation

- Does your family participate in the life of the community in the area of worship, formation (education), and service?
- Has your child received appropriate formation for his/her age?
- Does your family pray together at home?
- As parents, are you willing to commit to the continuing formation of your child in worship, formation, and service?

A candidate's readiness involves the following:

- A person must be baptized and have the use of reason (about the age of seven)
- Developmentally disabled persons should be confirmed after appropriate catechesis. If catechesis is not possible, he/she should be confirmed.
- Does the person express a desire to celebrate confirmation?
- Does the candidate participate in the worship life (Eucharist) of the community regularly?
- Has the person been formed in faith in an age-appropriate manner?
- Is there a commitment from this person to continue formation and participation in the worship life of the community?

*Because sacraments are community celebrations, the **parish** also has a responsibility in sacramental preparation.*

- Does your parish provide you (parents) with necessary support and information to enable you to fulfill your role as primary educator of your child?
- Does your parish provide opportunities for life-long faith formation?
- Does the community welcome children into its life?
- Retreats and service projects can help prepare children more fully for the sacrament of confirmation as well as for their future lives as fully initiated members of the Church.

The Role of the Sponsor

- Sponsors are to have an active role in the preparation of the candidate.
- Sponsors must be 16 years of age or older, Catholic, confirmed, leading a life in conformity with the faith, who has received Eucharist, and who is not bound by any **canonical penalty**.
- He/she must be willing and able to share faith and to make the necessary time commitment to fulfill his/her responsibility.
- It is preferable for the godparent to be the sponsor at confirmation. This manifests clearly the connection between baptism and confirmation. Others may, however, be asked to fulfill this role.
- Parents may not be godparents or sponsors for their children. They have a particular and very important role as primary catechists of their children.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

In The
Diocese of St. Augustine



*Office of
Christian Formation*

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation that is closely connected to the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. It completes the sacrament of baptism, brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace and strengthens the gifts of the Spirit received at baptism. The sacrament of confirmation also leads us to the Eucharist as the way to live out our lives as fully initiated Catholics.

Confirmation Through History

In the first centuries of the Church, Confirmation was almost always celebrated at the time one was baptized. When people were baptized, they emerged from the water and the new life they received was sealed by an anointing with oil (chrismation) by the bishop. At the same celebration, they were welcomed to the table of the Eucharist for the first time.

Early in the Church, a custom developed for the anointing of the newly baptized by the priest immediately after baptism, followed by a second anointing performed by the bishop. The western Church has reserved these two anointings, one by the priest or deacon at baptism and the other at confirmation by the bishop. The Eastern Church combined the two and the anointings are done by either priest or bishop.

Throughout the centuries, the time lapse between baptism and confirmation grew until confirmation was celebrated around the age of 14. Eucharist was still celebrated after confirmation. Pope Pius X lowered the age of reception of Eucharist to the age of reason, but did not address the issue of the age for Confirmation.

The Second Vatican Council called for a revision of the Rite of Confirmation that reflected its close connection to baptism. In 1972, The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was promulgated. In this Rite, un-baptized adults and children of catechetical age are to be fully initiated (receive baptism, confirmation and Eucharist) at the same ceremony.

The revised Rite of Confirmation permits the Conference of Bishops to designate the age when confirmation will be celebrated. The U.S. Bishops have stated that the sacrament may be conferred anytime between the ages of 7 and 19 with each bishop establishing the norm for his diocese. The Diocese of St. Augustine confirms youth who are in the eighth grade or higher.

The content of the preparation is to have at its core the format/structure of the Eucharistic celebration. Themes should include “sharing, listening, eating, conversing, giving, thanking and celebrating.” (NCD, #133)

SACRAMENTAL POLICIES FOR THE DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

The Diocese of St. Augustine establishes the following requirements for the celebration of the Sacraments of confirmation, first penance, and first Eucharist for School Aged Children as follows:

1. Ongoing remote preparation is essential prior to sacramental catechesis.
2. Readiness of candidates is determined through consultation with parents, catechists, pastor and candidates.
3. Remote preparation is provided through the Religious Education Program, Catholic School program and home school programs during their regular classroom instruction. All programs mentioned will utilize the same text selected by

the D.R.E. and the school principal for consistency and continuity from the approved U.S.C.C.B. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) list. The choice of texts would then need to be approved by the Office of Christian Formation and the Diocesan Office of Education Services.

4. Immediate preparation for the sacraments involves religious education programs, Catholic school programs and those who home school joining together for a minimum of six (6) hours, and a maximum of twelve (12) hours for each sacrament. Sacramental catechesis takes place during parental meetings and/or parent/family rituals, workshops, and/or retreat time.
5. Since full initiation is the norm for all Catholics, persons with special needs (families with unique needs, including physical, emotional and mental disabilities but not limited to these circumstances) are to be included within all formation, training and participation of sacraments.
6. Parents and other role models are encouraged to act as witnesses by their regular participation in church life within the parish.
7. The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. A privileged time and place for the sacraments, namely confirmation and first Eucharist, is the Sunday assembly.

**A complete copy of the
Sacramental Guidelines of the Diocese of St. Augustine is
on the diocesan Website www.dosafl.com or
at your parish.**