



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

Guidelines for Adult Confirmation Sacramental Preparation

Goal of Adult Confirmation Sacramental Preparation

The priority of any Confirmation preparation process is to assist our Catholic adults as they deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. Developing and strengthening one's relationship with the person of Jesus as well as with his Body, the Church, is tantamount. Confirmation empowers the faithful to more fully live out their baptismal call; sacramental preparation should be offered with this goal in mind.

Beyond this, "the general principle to be followed is that catechesis is to be tailored to the person's needs." (#69, Diocese of Honolulu's *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance*, available on the diocesan website.)

Discerning the Faith Formation Needs of Adult Confirmation Candidates

Just as no two catechumens or candidates for full communion are the same, so too Catholic adults who wish to be confirmed vary in their level of formation in the faith. Some examples:

1. The man who has raised his children Catholic and attended Mass regularly for decades. He's been involved with parish life varying from being an usher to serving on his parish stewardship committee. Already demonstrating his formation in the faith, he would probably benefit most from immediate preparation of the sacrament, including an exploration of the rite of Confirmation itself and an opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Penance. (Diocesan Norms, #71)
2. The man who was raised Catholic, stopped practicing his faith while in college and started to attend a number of nondenominational churches in his late 20s. He eventually decided he misses the Eucharist and has just started coming to Mass once again. He was pretty active in his nondenominational church, but is new to your parish. He loves the Bible but is not very clear about differences in faith between his last church and your Catholic parish. In addition to immediate sacramental preparation, this man might benefit from being invited to participate in a short-term, small group faith sharing opportunity to help him develop his relationship with Christ's body, the Church, and his particular parish.
3. The woman who stopped practicing her Catholic faith as a teenager when her parents divorced and she moved to a new city. Fifteen years later, she is married and recently baptized her firstborn child. Thinking about her desire to raise her own daughter in the faith, she asks to be confirmed. She's just started coming back to Mass. Speaking with her, it appears that her desire is sincere, but that she really doesn't remember much about the faith. She might benefit from being invited to participate for a year alongside those in the parish catechumenate process (aka, RCIA). If she does participate, she should never be treated like the unbaptized catechumens or the baptized candidates, in terms of the various rites and dismissals and such. If she is not interested in a full, one-year process, she should not be made to do so and something briefer should be offered to her with the hope that it will spark interest in her in growing in her faith more in the future.

4. The woman who was baptized but has received neither First Holy Communion nor Confirmation. It would be appropriate to ask this woman to participate for a year alongside those in the parish catechumenate process (aka, RCIA), as described in paragraph #70 of the Diocesan Norms.

NOTE: Catholic adults who have received First Holy Communion and who already demonstrate some evidence of a relationship with Jesus and his Church, expressed by involvement in the parish, should not be asked to participate in a year-long RCIA process. (In other words, knowledge of doctrines is not the primary emphasis – attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist regularly are.)

Considerations for Adults receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation

“To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* CCC, #1310). This includes repentance from grave sin (e.g., ending immoral living situations) and reception of the sacrament of Penance. Catholic adults who are invalidly married are to prepare to have their marriages validated, and the sacrament of Confirmation could be administered at the same liturgy in which the sacramental marriage is celebrated, with the Confirmation preceding the marriage.

When Can the Sacrament of Confirmation Be Celebrated with Catechized Adults?

The Diocesan Norms indicate the following options for celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation with catechized Catholics over the age of 13:

1. During the Easter season: “Pastors, parochial vicars, and chaplains are delegated the faculty by the bishop to celebrate Confirmation on any Sunday of the Easter season, from the Easter vigil until Pentecost, for those baptized Catholics who are 13 years old or older. This provides an alternative for teenagers or adults to be confirmed by the priest at a parish Mass or by the bishop at the parish celebration of Confirmation and first Holy Communion.” (Diocesan Norms, #74)
2. By the priest at other times of the year: “To give Confirmation on other occasions, the priest must first request delegation to confirm from the bishop, vicar general, or judicial vicar/director of canonical affairs. Without the delegated faculty, Confirmation of a baptized Catholic by a priest is invalid.” (Diocesan Norms, #75)
3. Requests can also be made to the Bishop’s Office for Bishop Silva to celebrate the sacrament with adults at your parish during a Sunday Mass.

Essential Teachings for Adult Preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation: Immediate Preparation

Recommend 3-5 sessions, although sessions could be combined based on the needs of the confirmation candidates. Sessions should include the following topics:

1. Confirmation, Baptism and Eucharist as constituting the sacraments of initiation (CCC 1285)
2. The Signs and the Rite of Confirmation; the celebration of Confirmation (CCC 1293-1301)
3. The Effects of Confirmation; the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1302-1305, 1830-1832)
4. Who Can Receive the Sacrament (CCC 1306-1310)
5. The Bishop as the Ordinary Minister of the sacrament (CCC 1312-1313)
6. A (re)introduction to the apostolic life, to a life of stewardship, of sharing one's time, talents and treasures (CCC 898-900)

Adapted from *Sacramental Catechesis: An Online Resources for Dioceses and Eparchies*, 2012.
Available at www.usccb.org

Short-Term, Small Group Faith Sharing Opportunity

Recommended for those who might benefit from and respond to the invitation to a faith-sharing process to reconnect them to their faith (such as in situation 2 above). Six to twelve small group, faith sharing sessions are recommended, although this process could be adapted as a one or two day retreat or similar. Faith sharing groups should cover the six essential teachings given below as well as one or more of the following possible topics:

- Role of the Mass, perhaps including some introduction into the various parts of the Mass and how to more actively participate in the Mass
- Prayer and Spirituality, including both individual and communal types of prayer
- Background on the importance of the sacraments in living out the faith, perhaps including sessions on one or more specific sacraments
- Components of the creed, the core tenets that make up our profession of faith
- Christian morality – why what we do as part of the Body of Christ matters, for us and for others, perhaps including aspects of outreach and Catholic Social Teaching

Potential Resources for Use with Adult Confirmation Sessions

Last Updated December 14, 2016

For Immediate Preparation

Birmingham, Mary (2013). *Confirming Adult Catholics: Five Sessions for Preparation and Reflection*. World Library Publications, Franklin Park, Illinois.

Mann, Patricia, M. (2012). *Sent Forth in the Spirit: A Confirmation Text for Adults*. Leonine Publishers, Phoenix, Arizona.

Swain, Sharon (2008). *Confirmation Book for Adults*. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. London.

For Small Group, Faith Sharing:

DeSiano, Rev. Frank (2011). *Seeking Christ*. Paulist Evangelization Ministries, Washington D.C.

DeSiano, Rev. Frank and Boyack, Rev. Kenneth (2008). *Awakening Faith: Reconnecting with Your Catholic Faith*. Paulist Evangelization Ministries, Washington D.C.

Lori, Most Rev. William E. (2015). *The Joy of Believing: A Practical Guide to the Catholic Faith*. Word Among Us Press, Frederick, Maryland.

Rolheiser, Rev. Ronald (2009). *Longing for the Holy: Spirituality for Everyday Life*. Renew International, Plainfield, NJ.