



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

Liturgical & Musical Guidelines for the Sacrament of Confirmation

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

Diocese of Buffalo

The following guidelines have been developed in consultation with the bishops and vicar general of this diocese. Please refer to these guidelines when preparing the candidates and preparing the liturgy.

Scheduling Protocol

The Chancery will send letters with application forms to pastors/pastoral administrators to schedule their Confirmation liturgy in the spring and fall seasons. The pastor or parish catechetical leader should complete the application forms and return them to the Chancery promptly before the deadline stated on the letter. The Confirmation application and information forms are also available on the diocesan website for download (start at the “Chancery & Administration” menu, and use the “Confirmation Forms” link in the dropdown menu).

Parishes with smaller numbers of candidates may want to consider joining together with nearby parishes or the vicariate. A Sunday liturgy is also an option for smaller parishes or in instances where they plan a special mass on Sunday. Lastly, all parishes are invited to celebrate Confirmation at St. Joseph’s Cathedral on the Solemnity of Pentecost. This option is on the forms.

Be sure to offer several alternative dates for celebrating Confirmation when requesting your date from the Chancery to make it easier to schedule the Confirmation.

Preparing for the Confirmation Liturgy

Before the day of your parish’s Confirmation, please:

1. Review the *Rite of Confirmation* with the candidates prior to the celebration to ensure they understand the basic structure of the celebration. This is an opportunity for liturgical catechesis.
 - Practice aloud the appropriate responses of the Rite of Confirmation with each candidate, including the Renewal of Baptismal Promises (“I do”), Anointing with Chrism, (“Amen”) and the Greeting of Peace (“And with your spirit”), so that the various movements of the Rite of Confirmation will flow smoothly.

2. Prayerfully reflect upon selected readings and the prayers of the *Roman Missal*, keeping in mind the following:
 - If the Confirmation liturgy is being celebrated on a Sunday of Advent, Lent or Easter, or another day with the rank of “solemnity,” the readings and Mass prayers for the Mass of that day must be used.
 - If the Confirmation liturgy is being celebrated on any other day, select the appropriate Scripture readings from the options given in the *Rite of Confirmation*.
 - If one of the candidates is selected to be a lector, take care that whoever is chosen to read possesses good public speaking skills and reads the Scripture passage in a meaningful way. Have the readers practice in the church from the ambo with the microphone.
3. Consideration is always given to the liturgical season in which the sacrament is celebrated. Therefore, do not replace the seasonal environment with Confirmation banners and symbols.
4. Representatives from the various parish and liturgical ministries should be present and involved in the liturgical celebration (i.e., lectors, cantors, choirs, altar servers, etc.).
 - Since the candidates for Confirmation will be completing their initiation into the Catholic community, the liturgy should be a celebration of the entire parish community.
5. A printed worship aid/booklet is recommended with appropriately noted congregational responses, order of the liturgy, and hymns in order to encourage full and active participation.
 - The worship aid/booklet could also contain the names of the Confirmation candidates and an acknowledgement page listing all those who have assisted in the Confirmation liturgy and prepared the candidates for the sacrament.
 - Copyright permissions are required from the publishers whose words and music are being used; credit is to be given in the printed booklet.
 - Send a copy of the printed worship aid to the Chancery at least two weeks before the scheduled Confirmation liturgy.
6. The person in charge of coordinating the Confirmation liturgy should meet with the master of ceremonies when he arrives with the bishop or the vicar general.

The Confirmation Liturgy

Vestments

Red vestments are worn for Confirmation. However, on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, the octave days of Easter and all Solemnities, the color of the Mass of the day is worn.

Concelebrants may use white diocesan vestments.

Altar Servers

Altar servers should be assigned to fill the roles of cross bearer, two candle bearers, and miter and crozier bearers. Preparation for the altar servers should be done by the pastor or his delegate. Altar servers should arrive 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the liturgy and meet with the master of ceremonies for further instructions.

Seating Arrangements

The Confirmation candidates and sponsors should occupy the reserved front pews on both sides and be seated together (in alternating rows). They may either be seated prior to Mass, or they may walk in the entrance procession.

Procession of the Candidates

Organize the candidates' movement from their seats to the Bishop as a simple procession, with candidates coming up one after another or across for the anointing with chrism. An usher or member of the faith formation team should be stationed up front at one or both sides of the main aisle to indicate where the line waits and to make sure that the candidates approach in an organized fashion, accompanied by their sponsors.

Photography

Flash photography may not be taken during the Mass as it interferes with and distracts from the action of the liturgy. The Mass planning team should discuss ways to handle photography during the Mass so that it does not interrupt or interfere with the liturgical action. Individual photographs of the newly confirmed and their sponsors may be taken at the conclusion of Mass and after a group photo if one is desired.

Rite of Confirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

After the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor or catechetical leader invites the candidates only to stand as a group and then presents them to the celebrant, attesting to their readiness for the sacrament. The candidates will then be invited to be seated for the homily.

Homily

The celebrant may preach from the center aisle or from the pulpit. He may ask the candidates questions concerning the sacrament or engage them during the homily.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Following the homily, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises takes place in a dialogue between the celebrant and the candidates. The candidates alone stand, ready to respond *robustly*, “I do”. The renewal concludes with the words, “This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord,” after which the people respond, “Amen.”

Laying on of Hands

For the Laying on of Hands all stand — candidates, sponsors and the assembly. The celebrant alone extends hands over the candidates and says the prayer. After this the assembly is seated.

Anointing with Chrism

The celebrant will stand in the center at the entrance to the sanctuary to anoint the candidates. The candidates and sponsors come forward to the celebrant and stand as near to the celebrant as possible. The sponsor stands behind the candidate with his/her right hand on the candidate’s right shoulder. The heads of the candidates must be completely uncovered for the anointing with Sacred Chrism. As one candidate departs after being anointed, the next one immediately steps forward. Ushers or other ministers may be positioned near the front of the line to ensure the smooth flow of the candidates. The parish should consider the needs of those with physical limitations and decide the best placement of them in the line. Please notify the celebrant before the liturgy if he needs to go to a candidate who is physically unable to come to him.

Music at the Confirmation Liturgy

Music is an integral part of the Confirmation Mass and should assist the community in expressing and strengthening its faith, reflecting the sacred joy of the occasion. Above all, everyone should be encouraged to sing the music that is chosen. Confirmation is not a time for choirs and ensembles to perform. Keep the community’s needs and capabilities in mind; be sure to choose music that is familiar to everyone.

Confirmation is a wonderful time to unify your musical groups. Have the choir learn the ensemble’s music, and vice versa. Form one unified group of musicians and do not have a choir and contemporary ensemble compete against each other from different areas of the church. The music chosen for the Confirmation celebration should be prepared and rehearsed well in advance. If Confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday or feast day, music should be chosen that reflects the character of that day as well as the occasion of Confirmation.

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The following parts of the Mass should be sung by the entire assembly:

- **Entrance Hymn**—all gathered should sing the entrance hymn. A familiar and easy hymn with a recurring refrain might work best. All participating in the entrance procession, including the candidates, should be encouraged to sing while in procession.
- **Penitential Act**—if sung, it should be simple to allow for greater participation. Sprinkling with holy water replaces the Penitential Act during the Easter season. Be mindful of the liturgical season in which you are celebrating the sacrament.
- **Gloria**—to be sung on Sundays and Solemnities; it should be omitted if Confirmation is celebrated on a weekday.
- **Responsorial Psalm**—must have a text taken from the Book of Psalms. It is not a “song” that is in responsorial style (e.g., “Be Not Afraid” is a “song” in responsorial style, but it is not a “psalm”). It should always be sung, at least the refrain, and can be led by a cantor or choir with all responding with the refrain. The responsorial psalm should be preceded by a brief period of silence.
- **Gospel Acclamation**—always sung; during the season of Lent, an appropriate Lenten acclamation replaces the “alleluia.” The gospel acclamation should be preceded by a period of silence.
- **Anointing during the Rite of Confirmation**—music may be played during the anointing, but it must be done in such a way that the celebrant's words are heard by each candidate as he anoints them. The music used should complement the action taking place, and reflect the sacredness of the occasion. Therefore, music should remain supportive of the liturgy, in the background, and must never overshadow the action.
- **Preparation of the Gifts**—a choir or ensemble can provide music during the preparation of the gifts, or all may sing an appropriate hymn. Instrumental music would also be appropriate. Whatever music is chosen should end as preparation of the gifts is completed. Silence is also appropriate. Lengthy musical selections are not appropriate during the preparation rite.
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist Acclamations**—must always be sung with all participating. A choir or ensemble should never sing these acclamations alone; use a familiar setting.
 - **Sanctus**
 - **The Mystery of Faith**
 - **Great Amen**
 - **Our Father**—typically recited
 - **Agnus Dei**—should cover the whole action of the breaking of the bread. A cantor or choir with all responding appropriately may lead it.
- **Sign of Peace**—music, instrumental or choral, is not called for during the Sign of Peace.
- **Communion Processional Song**—should begin as the celebrant receives communion and continue throughout the communion procession. When the last person in the procession receives communion, the hymn should begin to wind down. A hymn or several hymns that have a recurring and familiar refrain work best. The communion procession is not a time for

choirs and ensembles to perform, nor is it a time simply for instrumental music. The music ministry should take part in the communion procession while singing. If this is not possible, then it may be best that the music ministry receive communion last. After communion, there should be an appropriate period of silence, after which the entire assembly *may* sing a hymn of praise or a psalm. It is not desirable that the entire time after the distribution of communion be filled with music.

- **Recessional Hymn**—while not actually part of the Roman Rite, it has become customary in most places. If there is a procession to leave the church, it may be accompanied by a hymn sung by all. The procession could also be accompanied by the choirs and ensembles singing alone, or simply by instrumental music

Questions or clarifications regarding the music guidelines, please call Alan Lukas, Diocesan Director of Music for the Diocese of Buffalo and Christ the King Seminary at 716-652-6565 or email adlukas@cks.edu.

Other Related Items

Dress of the Candidates

The candidates are to dress modestly and appropriately for the liturgy. Clothing that is tight fitting or too short is not considered appropriate for the liturgy. Coordinators need discuss this with the candidates prior to the celebration. Styles of dress are subjective, therefore please be very clear about what is appropriate and what is not. Other important items to consider:

- The use of Confirmation robes is discouraged as they tend to be confused with graduation robes. Despite being discouraged, robes are not forbidden. If robes are worn, the appropriate color is white to recall the garment worn at baptism.
- “Confirmation stoles” are never to be worn by the candidates; the stole is a liturgical garb distinct to an ordained minister. Because of this, only ordained ministers wear stoles as a sign of their office.
- All candidates are to wear a printed name tag with just their Confirmation name on it.
- Confirmation coordinators are advised to have extra articles of clothing on hand in the event that a candidate is inappropriately dressed for the Confirmation liturgy (i.e., extra ties, shoulder shawls, sweater dresses, etc.).

Candidates Carrying Miscellaneous Items

The candidates are not to carry any religious items with them (i.e., religious articles, sacramentals, lighted candles). Nothing should distract the candidates and sponsors from prayerfully listening to the celebrant and responding clearly to what he says. Use of lighted candles during the renewal of baptismal promises is not indicated in the Rite and is therefore not permitted.

Preparation of the Gifts

A few of the newly confirmed may be chosen ahead of time and rehearsed to present the gifts of bread and wine to the celebrant. Do not add additional items to the procession with the gifts of bread and wine.

Certificates

Certificates are not required. However, if the parish provides Confirmation certificates for the newly-confirmed, they are NEVER to be distributed during the Confirmation liturgy. They are to be distributed sometime after the conclusion of the Mass or at a later date, so that they do not resemble a graduation diploma.

Questions or clarifications regarding these guidelines, please call Kaitlin Garrity at (716) 847-5521 or email kgarrity@buffalodiocese.org.