



Liturgy Office and the Office of Catechesis

March 2, 2026

Implementation Guidelines for the Updated Policy on the Age of Confirmation

Introduction

On August 15, 2002, Bishop Aquila issued the Pastoral Letter “Send Forth Your Spirit.” In it he promulgated the policy that “all baptized persons should be appropriately prepared for and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before the first reception of the Holy Eucharist.” Additionally, he lowered the age for the reception of Confirmation in the Diocese of Fargo to third grade.

In his Pastoral Letter “Go, Make Disciples” dated February 2, 2026, Bishop Folda determined that the Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated separately from First Eucharist and for children in fourth grade.

The following guidelines are intended to help pastors, Directors of Religious Education, and other parish staff and volunteers to transition to this updated policy. This document will cover the timeline for the implementation of the updated Confirmation policy, the preparation of students for the reception of First Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the celebration of the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation.

The Timeline for the Implementation of the Updated Policy on the Age of Confirmation

Questions about the timeline for the implementation of the updated policy on the age of Confirmation should be directed to the Liturgy Office.

Spring of 2026

Confirmations scheduled for the spring of 2026 will occur as previously announced. There will be no change in these celebrations. As has been the practice for the past 20 years, children are to be prepared to for and will receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist in one ceremony.

First Eucharist

Beginning in the Spring of 2027, the celebration of First Eucharist will take place in all parishes for children in the third grade. Pastors are free to schedule the reception of First Eucharist for students in the third grade at any time during the Spring of 2027. Although not strictly necessary,

it is recommended to schedule this celebration during a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass and during the Easter season. The pastor will also set the time for the rehearsal.

If a large number of children will receive First Eucharist, a pastor may schedule multiple Masses when the children can receive their First Eucharist. Ideally, all celebrations will occur during the same weekend. However, if this is not feasible, they could be scheduled over consecutive weekends. Multiple celebrations of First Eucharist should not be spread throughout the year (for example, some during the fall and others during the spring).

If it is impossible for a child to receive First Eucharist on the scheduled date, accommodations should be made, such as receiving First Eucharist on a different date or in another parish.

If a child has not been properly prepared or there is another legitimate reason to delay the reception of First Eucharist, the child may receive their First Eucharist at a later age once fully prepared. If First Eucharist is delayed until fourth grade, the child should receive their First Eucharist at least one month prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Recall that one of the principal reasons Bishop Folda is moving the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation to a later age is to avoid young children receiving both sacraments in the same ceremony.

Uncatechized children in fourth grade and above should receive formation appropriate to their age following the Order of Christian Initiation of Adult. A pastor has permission to confirm these children and does not need to explicitly request it from the Bishop.

Confirmation

Beginning in the Spring of 2028, the Bishop will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for children in the fourth grade.

The Bishop will not schedule Confirmations during the Spring of 2027. However, during this period where there is a need to confirm a large number of children **in fourth grade or older**, a pastor may request that the Bishop come and confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on these children. Pastors should send their request to the Liturgy Office no later than July 2026. During this year, it is recommended that parishes join together for regional celebrations of teenage children. Deans are to assist with organizing regional celebrations. Alternatively, if it is not feasible for a teenage child to participate in a regional celebration, a pastor may request delegation to confirm the child.

When the regular schedule of Confirmations resumes in the Spring of 2028, the Liturgy Office will once again coordinate the scheduling of the Bishop for Confirmations. A draft schedule will be sent out to pastors in the Summer of 2027. Confirmations will be scheduled during the Lent and Easter seasons. As has been the practice, large parishes will have their own celebrations, while small parishes will come together for regional celebrations. Once they receive the final schedule, the pastor will determine the date and time of the rehearsal.

The Bishop is open to celebrating Confirmations on a weeknight. If a pastor wants the celebration of Confirmation on a weeknight, he should communicate this desire to the Liturgy Office by May 2027.

The Preparation of Students for the Reception of the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation

Questions about the preparation of children for the reception of First Eucharist or the Sacrament Confirmation should be directed to the Office of Catechesis.

First Eucharist

The sacramental preparation requirements for children preparing for the reception of First Eucharist are: parents receive the required diocesan *Parent Handbook for First Eucharist* and textbook, and attend the parent meetings; the children attend classes, the retreat, and the rehearsal. Additionally, each child is interviewed to assess their readiness to receive the sacraments.

Confirmation

The sacramental preparation requirements for children in fourth grade preparing for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation are: parents receive the required diocesan *Parent Handbook for Confirmation* and textbook, and attend the parent meetings; the children attend classes, the retreat, and the rehearsal. Additionally, each child is interviewed to assess their readiness. Each child also chooses a sponsor, who is to be present at the rehearsal and the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. A “Confirmation name” may be chosen, or a confirmand may be confirmed under his or her baptismal name.

Textbook

All parishes and Catholic schools will continue to use the mandated textbooks for children in third grade preparing for the reception of First Eucharist, and for children in fourth grade preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

For children in grades five and above, contact the Office of Catechesis for recommendations.

The Pastor or DRE of special needs children should contact the Office of Catechesis for appropriate resources.

Parent Meetings

For each sacrament, sessions will be held with parents, so that they are informed of the requirements for each sacrament, as well as receive at least two (2) hours of catechesis. The catechesis is to be given by a parish priest or deacon, or a sufficiently trained lay person. The pastor will determine whether this will occur during one or two parent meetings.

Retreats

Since Confirmation and First Eucharist will be received in different grades, there will always be two separate retreats. Each retreat is to be 3-5 hours in length. These retreats are to present the Church’s teachings on Confirmation and the Eucharist in language suited to the children’s age level, and should be a time of prayer and practice of the liturgy. A priest or a group of priests should be available after the retreat to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Where feasible, a group of parishes may consider collaborating on offering a retreat for children in their region. In instances where older children are preparing for the reception of both Confirmation and First Eucharist, one retreat may be held which covers both the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

The Celebrations of First Eucharist and the Sacrament Confirmation

Questions about the celebration of First Eucharist or the Sacrament Confirmation should be directed to the Liturgy Office.

First Eucharist

When the reception of First Eucharist is celebrated in parishes beginning in the spring of 2027, the choice of prayers and readings is governed by liturgical law. Where he is permitted to do so, Bishop Folda allows the use of the Votive Mass of Most Holy Eucharist. Briefly:

- a. Sundays of Lent:** The Mass and readings of the day are to be used. Neither the Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist nor its proper readings may be used. Violet vestments are worn.
- b. Weekdays of Lent:** The Mass and readings of the day may be used. The Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist and/or its proper readings may be used. When the Votive Mass is celebrated, white vestments are worn. Otherwise, violet vestments are worn.
- c. Sundays of Easter, the Octave of Easter and Solemnities:** The Mass and readings of the day will be used. Neither the Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist nor its proper readings may be used. White vestments are worn.
- d. Weekdays of Easter:** The Mass and readings of the day may be used. The Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist and/or its proper readings may be used. White vestments are worn.
- e. Sundays in Ordinary Time:** The Mass and readings of the day may be used. The Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist and/or its proper readings may be used. When the Votive Mass is celebrated, white vestments are worn. Otherwise, green vestments are worn.
- f. Weekdays of Ordinary time:** The Mass and readings of the day may be used. The Votive Mass of the Most Holy Eucharist and/or its proper readings may be used. When the Votive Mass is celebrated, white vestments are worn.

On all occasions, the homily should include a reflection on the mystery of Holy Communion and the reception of the children's First Eucharist.

The pastor will determine whether children will receive their First Eucharist as a group (that is, all seated together), or with their families. He should consult with parents to determine whether they have a preference.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The Bishop always celebrates the Sacrament of Confirmation within Mass. Follow the directives in the *Confirmation Manual* and on "Liturgical Planning Sheet." These documents are available from the [Confirmation page](http://www.fargodiocese.org/confirmation) of the diocesan website (www.fargodiocese.org/confirmation). The Liturgical Planning Sheet should be submitted to the Liturgy Office no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled celebration.