

PAGELLA OF FACULTIES

III. Process of Preparation for Reception of Confirmation

- A. It is impossible to prescribe a single catechesis for confirmation (cf. NCD, #119) which meets the needs of each parish in the diocese. However, since full initiation into the Church occurs by stages, the RCIA provides the norm for catechetical as well as liturgical practice in this regard (NCD #115). All catechesis will take place within the parish community, which has the obligation to participate in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed. Parents along with sponsors are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. A parental program is an important element in planning the formation process for Confirmation.
- B. Parishes are strongly encouraged to develop a single process of preparation for all confirmation candidates which is part of the regular religious formation of its youth.
- C. To enable the candidates of Confirmation to enter more deeply into the Paschal Mystery, their preparation may include:
 - 1. daily personal prayer;
 - 2. a retreat experience provided by the parish or the diocese, e.g., TEC, Quest, Search, etc.;
 - 3. celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION GUIDELINES

- I. The preparation process for Confirmation must be seen within the total faith formation processes of a parish community. Although the actual preparation takes place within a particular time frame, we must strive to assist participants in living their faith on a daily basis far beyond the celebration of sacrament.

This preparation process, taking place within the parish community, needs to be designed so as to more fully incorporate the candidates for Confirmation into the life of the parish. The parish community, as well, has the obligation to participate in the preparation of those to be confirmed and to be models of lived faith. In order to realize this, the preparation of adolescents for Confirmation is to:

- A. be 1-2 years in length;
- B. include these dimensions:

1. **Word:**

It is impossible to prescribe a single catechesis for confirmation (cf. *NCD*, #119) which meets the needs of each parish in the diocese. It is, however, important that the candidates have an understanding of Church teaching. The four areas of instruction, drawing upon the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, are to include:

- a) the Creed;
 - b) the Sacraments;
 - c) Life in Christ/Discipleship;
 - d) Prayer.

2. **Worship:**

The preparation program should assist the candidates in becoming people of prayer, individually and communally. Participation in the sacramental life of the Church is an important expression of a person of prayer. Candidates are expected to:

- a) attend weekly Sunday Eucharist and Holy Days of Obligation; **if this expectation is not being met, Confirmation should be delayed;**
 - b) regularly celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially during the Advent & Lenten seasons;
 - c) be integrated into the liturgical ministries (e.g. proclamation of the Word, music, hospitality) in accordance to their particular gifts and abilities;
 - d) take part in a retreat experience as an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with God, self, and others. Retreat experiences could include: parish sponsored retreats, Quest, TEC, NET, or retreat center offerings.

3. **Service:**

- a) All Christians are called to live their faith through acts of service. The Corporal Works of Mercy (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick, shelter the homeless, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead) serve as a framework and model from our Catholic tradition for a life of service. Those preparing for Confirmation are to participate in service throughout the preparation process. This is best realized by integrating the candidates into the life of the parish as it lives out the Corporal Works of Mercy.

- b) An effective method for engaging youth in service activities is through group experiences where the candidates are exposed to ways of living out the Corporal Works of Mercy. It is also recommended that time be given after times of service to process the experiences with the candidates. This would provide a framework for connecting their experience to scripture, tradition and a lived faith response. It could also serve as a means to help the candidates explore ways in which they can live out the Corporal Works of Mercy.
- c) Parishes are encouraged to provide a minimum of three service opportunities annually for adolescents preparing for Confirmation. These service opportunities should be designed so as to promote and develop an attitude of Christian service rather than an accumulation of service hours.

4. Community:

At the heart of the Confirmation preparation process is the faith community. Confirmation preparation takes place within a faith community and the initiation is into a faith community. The community dimension should be realized through:

- a) parental involvement in the process;
- b) parish prayer support;
- c) members of the parish serving as sponsors, mentors, service companions, prayer companions, catechists, etc.;
- d) assisting with the discernment process by means of interviews with the candidates at the beginning of the process, mid-way through the process, and prior to celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation;
- e) the active participation of a sponsor or representative of the parish for each candidate; this sponsor or representative MUST BE A FAITHFUL AND ACTIVE CATHOLIC.

- II. The period following the celebration of Confirmation must be seen as a time for those who were confirmed to continue to be active in the life of the parish, in its ministries of Word, Worship, Service and Community. Continued assistance and mentoring in these ministries is essential.
- III. The Pastoral Office of the Word is available to assist parishes in designing any of the dimensions of a Confirmation preparation process.

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July 13, 1999

Dear Fathers and Pastoral Administrators,

I am enclosing Confirmation Preparation Guidelines. The background for these guidelines is as follows.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council informed me that students from different parishes are comparing their respective requirements for Confirmation. This has led to some confusion for the students and the parents. I asked Ray Lagasse to propose some guidelines that I could send to all the parishes so that we would have some uniformity. He formed a committee of interested persons, who met several times, and presented me with an initial draft.

After making some minor changes of my own, I presented these guidelines to the Priests' Council on June 24. The priests thought they would be helpful, and therefore the Council approved of them.

I am now promulgating them to be followed by all the parishes. Please see to it that these guidelines are followed.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Victor H. Balke", is written over a printed name.

+Victor H. Balke
Bishop of Crookston