

Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation



In Confirmation it is Christ who fills us with his Spirit, consecrating us as his witnesses. I wonder: How can one see that we have received the Gift of the Spirit? If we fulfil the works of the Spirit, if we speak the words instructed by the Spirit. Christian witness consists in doing only and all that the Spirit of Christ asks of us, giving us the strength to accomplish it.

Pope Francis, General Audience, 23rd May 2018

These guidelines are intended as a resource for all those who are responsible for preparing and coordinating the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in our diocese. We are grateful for the time and energy you put into helping our young people prepare for this important step on their journey of faith and we hope that these resources will be useful to you in planning and preparing your celebration.

May God bless you in all that you do with and for our young people.

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✠ Fintan Gavin
Bishop of Cork and Ross

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

The diocese proposes that each candidate should sit in the pew with their family and sponsor for the ceremony as it is in our family that our faith is first formed and nurtured. Just as we are presented for Baptism by our family at the beginning of our faith journey, so now on their Confirmation Day each candidate is called forth from their family, together with their sponsor, to confirm that baptismal calling and commitment.

BEFORE THE CEREMONY BEGINS

A few minutes before the ceremony begins it is useful for the school principal/a teacher/a member of the parish council to begin preparing the congregation for the celebration that is to follow. This is an opportunity to quieten the gathering, to remind them of the need to switch off their phones, not to take pictures during the ceremony and to invite them to be prayerfully present by participating fully and actively in the prayers and the hymns that are part of the ceremony. It is also an opportunity to ask the congregation to take a moment in quiet prayer for the candidates who are to be confirmed.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

ALL STAND

An entrance hymn, led by the Choir of 4th-5th class students, that focuses on the theme of Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Spirit, should accompany the entrance procession. All the candidates should participate in the singing of this hymn and, where possible, the congregation should be encouraged to join them.

If the candidates take part in the procession they are followed in the procession by the priests and finally by the Bishop.

BEFORE THE ACTUAL MASS BEGINS

ALL SIT

Now it is time for the Bishop's words of welcome.

If a representative of the school, candidates or parents also want to say a few words of welcome, now is the right time to do it. (OPTIONAL)

Please remember that in these short words of welcome we express our joy that families, the parish and the school community are gathering in the church today to pray together and celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation.

If the candidates have symbols to present of their giftedness or of their work and preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation – now is the time in which to bring them forward to the sanctuary. Symbols are brought forward by the candidates and presented to the Bishop. Have a space or table arranged in the sanctuary, or to one side of it, where these symbols can be placed and be visible, but preferably not in front of the altar or ambo and not on top of the altar. If a commentary accompanies the bringing forward of these symbols, it should be simple and brief. (OPTIONAL)

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ALL STAND

The Bishop begins the Mass celebration with the Sign of the Cross and the greeting: Peace be with you

PENITENTIAL ACT

In general there are two options for praying the Penitential Act:

Option A:

The Bishop first leads the congregation in praying the Confiteor *I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters.* and the Bishop then leads the congregation in the response: *Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.*

These responses can be spoken or they can be sung as one of the following: *Lord have mercy* or *A Thiarna, déan trócaire* or *Kyrie eleison.*

Option B:

In this case the Confiteor is not prayed and the Bishop leads the Penitential Act as follows:

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

All: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins: *Christ have mercy / A Chríost déan trócaire*

All: *Christ have mercy / A Chríost déan trócaire*

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you feed us with your body and blood: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

All: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

GLORIA

Where possible the Gloria should ideally be sung rather than being simply prayed. The Gloria is omitted when the Confirmation ceremony takes place during the season of Lent.

† LITURGY OF THE WORD †

ALL SIT

FIRST READING

The First Reading can be chosen from Suggested [Scripture Readings for the Liturgy of the Word](#).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The Responsorial Psalm should ideally be sung and is to be taken from the Biblical Psalms. The Responsorial Psalm ought not to be replaced with another hymn. Suggestions for Responsorial Psalms are included [here](#).

SECOND READING

The Second Reading can be chosen from Suggested [Scripture Readings for the Liturgy of the Word](#).

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ALL STAND

The *Alleluia* should be sung by the entire congregation all led by the Choir / a Candidate for Confirmation. The antiphon/ short verse can be spoken or sung and then the *Alleluia* is repeated once more. Suggestions for the Gospel acclamation are included in the [resource for music and hymns](#).

During the Season of Lent, the response 'Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of Eternal Glory' is sung in place of the Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING

The reading from the holy Gospel is proclaimed by the Priest (who asks the Bishop for the blessing before he proclaims the Gospel).

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES (OPTIONAL)

ALL SIT

The presentation of the Candidates should take place straight after the Gospel as the first part of the Rites of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

After the Gospel the Bishop stands at the presiding chair. The Candidates for Confirmation are presented by the class teacher/the principal/the priest. The nominated person says these or similar words: *These are the candidates who are to receive the sacrament of Confirmation today*. Then he/she calls the Candidates by name. Each Candidate stands when their name is called.

If there are very many candidates, they are not called by name. They are asked to stand to be presented to the Bishop.

HOMILY

ALL SIT

The Bishop then gives a brief homily, by which, shedding light on the readings, he leads, as if by hand, those to be confirmed, their sponsors and parents, and the whole gathering of the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.

† RITE OF CONFIRMATION †

ALL STAND

An appropriate hymn invoking the power of the Holy Spirit may be sung (OPTIONAL).
Suggestions are available [here](#).

THE CANDIDATES STAND

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

The candidates stand for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. See 'Text of the Rite of Confirmation' resource.

Bishop: Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

ALL STAND

THE CANDIDATES KNEEL

The candidates are invited to kneel. The Bishop, accompanied by the concelebrating priests, extend their hands calling down the Holy Spirit and the Bishop prays the Prayer of Consecration.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

ALL SIT

THE CANDIDATES APPROACH THE ALTAR TO BE CONFIRMED

The Bishop takes his place at the front of the sanctuary. At this point the candidates begin to come forward to the altar. The Bishop normally administers the anointing with both he and the candidates standing. This better expresses the symbolism of the candidate stepping into a new moment on their journey of faith.

Sponsors come forward and stand behind the candidate and place their right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate as a sign of their commitment to support the candidate in their journey of faith.

The class teacher introduces the Candidate to the Bishop by the Christian name. Then the Bishop usually has a little chat with the Candidate about his/her Confirmation name, the reason why it is being chosen, the sponsor, etc.

Then the Bishop (or the priest who administers the Sacrament with the Bishop that day) anoints the Candidate with Chrism, making the sign of the Cross on the forehead, saying:

Bishop: [*Chosen Confirmation Name of Candidate*] Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Candidate: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Candidate: And with your spirit.

Gentle hymns or instrumental music can accompany the anointing.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS / PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

ALL STAND

Candidates are invited forward by the Bishop to lead the prayers. There should be only 5-6 intercessions. The readers of the intercessions remain on the sanctuary until the Bishop reads the concluding prayer.

† LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST †

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

ALL SIT

The Bread and Wine only are brought in procession by some of the candidates and presented to the Bishop.

An Offertory Hymn or an instrumental piece of music may accompany the Offertory Procession. See list of '[Suggested Hymns and Music](#)'.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

POSTURE ACCORDING TO LOCAL CUSTOMS

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the following responses shall be sung by the candidates and the congregation:

- Holy, Holy. [Sanctus]
- Acclamation of Faith.
- The Great Amen.

COMMUNION RITE

ALL STAND

The Lord's Prayer may be spoken or sung in English or 'as Gaeilge'.

The Bishop invites the congregation to offer each other the Sign of Peace.

The Lamb of God [Agnus Dei] may be spoken or sung.

Suitable Communion Hymns may be sung by the candidates, the choir and the congregation during the distribution of Holy Communion. Suggestions are available [here](#).

POST-COMMUNION REFLECTION [OPTIONAL]

ALL SIT

An appropriate spoken reflection, hymn or instrumental piece can be used.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

ALL STAND

The Prayer after Communion is led by the Bishop.

WORDS OF THANKS [OPTIONAL]

ALL SIT

A brief word of thanks by the Candidates/ the Parents/ the Principal/ the Priest may be offered, if it is considered appropriate.

Usually the Bishop addresses the congregation before the final blessing as well.

FINAL BLESSING

ALL STAND

RECESSIONAL HYMN

ALL STAND

A suitable hymn with a Confirmation theme should be sung to conclude the liturgy.

Suggestions are available [here](#).

The candidates remain standing with their sponsors and families for the final hymn.

During the hymn the Bishop, the Priests and the altar servers leave the sanctuary and the procession moves to the sacristy.

After the hymn the Candidates may stand ready in front of the altar to have photographs taken with the Bishop.