

Preparing for Confirmation Liturgy

Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian Life and the Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of Initiation into the Christian Life. This sacramental moment is also a great opportunity to evangelize the whole community and to reach out to those who have been alienated. There will be many family members and guests who are new to your community. It is our chance to welcome them and show gracious hospitality as we celebrate the faith of the newly confirmed, who renew our faith, our community, and our church.

The following pages include the Rite of Confirmation with guidelines and instructions for celebration in the Archdiocese of Anchorage. These suggestions and resources are intended to assist priests, catechists, confirmation candidates, liturgical planning teams, and the entire parish community in fulfilling their pastoral responsibility in celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Please remember that the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is a time of special grace for those being confirmed. The entire focus should be upon Confirmation as a Sacrament, a liturgical action of the whole Church gathered around the Bishop. Confirmation is not a “graduation” or “presentation” ceremony, and those elements must be avoided in preparing the Liturgy.

- I. **General Preparation:** The Confirmation Liturgy demands careful preparation by a team that should include pastor, priests, deacons, Confirmation coordinators, and catechists who have worked with the candidates, members of the liturgy committee and music ministers. The Confirmation Liturgy has its own structure: the Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Confirmation and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Its integrity must be maintained. Care is taken to allow the Word and the symbolic action of these primary parts of the celebration to stand out, unencumbered by extraneous words or peripheral signs and symbols. The following are specific liturgical points regarding the celebration of Confirmation.
- II. **Symbols:** The primary symbols inherent to the liturgy itself need to be given careful attention, i.e., water, Chrism, book of Scripture, bread and wine, Easter candle and assembly. These symbols are most effective when allowed to be authentic forms of ritual expression without added words of explanation.
 - **Water:** Baptism begins our journey as part of the living Body of Christ; Confirmation completes the Christian Initiation begun in Baptism. For this reason, Confirmation is celebrated during the Easter Season. The baptismal water and its use in the Rite of Sprinkling frame and define the Confirmation liturgy. If a Baptismal font is located within the body of the Church, the liturgy will begin there. A large clear glass container for the water with an evergreen branch should be available and are most effective. If a baptismal font is not accessible, a prominent vessel of water placed on a small table or stand in a clearly visible area, easily accessible to the Bishop for the beginning of the liturgy is needed. The parish priests may assist the Archbishop in the sprinkling of the people.
 - **Easter Candle:** Since Confirmation is an initiation liturgy, it is appropriate to highlight the Easter Candle, which should be positioned near the ambo or font. [Only genuine full wax Easter Candles reflect the Risen Christ authentically. If possible, avoid artificial candles that burn oil, or small spring-loaded candles.]
 - **Chrism:** *“When (those baptized) are anointed with this holy oil and made the temples of your glory... Let this be indeed the Chrism of salvation for those who will be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.”* The Archbishop will use the Chrism of the Parish and it may be carried in the entrance procession and placed in a prominent place, near the font, or on the table holding the vessel of water.



- III. Scripture Readings and Sacramentary Prayers:** The Ritual for Confirmation states that the Readings may be taken from the Mass of the Day or from the Lectionary (#763-767). When Confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday Vigil, Sunday or Solemnity during the Easter Season, all the Readings and Prayers for that day **MUST** be used. If Confirmation is celebrated on a weekday during the Easter Season, either the readings for that day or alternate readings for Confirmation may be chosen. Although any of the Readings for Confirmation from the Lectionary may be used as indicated above, any of the Daily Easter Season Readings are most appropriate for the Confirmation liturgy. If Confirmation is celebrated on a weekday during Easter Season, the Prayers from the Ritual of Confirmation must be chosen.
- IV. Music:** Confirmation is a celebration of faith within the midst of the community of the Church. Music carefully selected and well rendered can heighten the celebration and strengthen the faith of the assembled believers. *The priority in selecting music is that it should be music known to the confirmation candidates, and music which they themselves will sing with spirit and fervor during the Liturgy.* Music selected should be artistically good, liturgically appropriate and pastorally suitable. Songs that speak of our Baptismal dignity, the Paschal Mystery, our call to Christian witness, and empowerment in the Holy Spirit are appropriate. It should be kept in mind that Confirmation "seals" the baptismal experience and should be seen intimately linked to an overall theology of initiation in which the Spirit is at work both in Baptism and Confirmation. Music should be selected to highlight those parts of the liturgical rite that are more significant: e.g., Word, Rite of Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- V. Worship Aids:** A printed booklet or pamphlet to assist in liturgical participation is a sign of welcome and highly recommended. It should not include prayers or readings in the language proclaimed, e.g. Scripture readings (unless multilingual), the Eucharistic prayer, special rites or ceremonies proclaimed by others, nor those prayers or responses which the assembly knows from memory. The worship aid should include all the music sung by the assembly, except for that music which is readily known, e.g., traditional chants. Copyright permissions need to be obtained and acknowledged for all music printed in the worship aid.
- VI. Choosing Ministers:** Those selected for various ministries within the Confirmation liturgy should be individuals who are prepared and who regularly serve in this capacity for the community. Unless a Confirmation candidate is well trained he/she should **NOT** be invited to perform the ministries of the Confirmation liturgy. on candidates are not to on as altar servers at their Confirmation.
- Lectors: While it may seem desirable to include Confirmation candidates as proclaimers of the Word, it is more effective to encourage their full and active participation in other ways. Freed from the anxiety of reading well or being in the right place at the right time, candidates are better able to reflect on the importance and meaning of the celebration and even feel supported by the witness of adult members who serve as lectors. In all cases the Scriptures must be proclaimed with dignity and clarity.
 - Acolytes: Confirmation candidates are not to function as acolytes at their Confirmation.
 - Deacon: The participation of a deacon is highly desired. The Deacon serves as a minister to the Archbishop, proclaims the Gospel, presents the sacred Chrism to the Archbishop, and assists as the rubrics specify.
- VII. Knights of Columbus & Knights of St. Peter Claver:** If present, they may be in the procession and should follow the cross bearer and acolytes and precede the concelebrants. The Knights should be seated to one side so as not to obstruct the participation of the candidates and sponsors. They do not draw their swords at any time in the Church; their heads are to remain uncovered throughout the Mass.

Liturgy Preparation Guide
RITE of CONFIRMATION – ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE



for the parish community of _____

Address _____

Contact _____ Email _____

Office Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Date of Celebration _____ Day _____ Time _____

Location for Celebration (church & city) _____

Number of Confirmandi – 10th Grade _____ 11th Grade _____ 12th Grade _____ Adults _____

Cross Cultural / Local Customs *The multicultural nature of the assembly should be considered during the process of planning readings, ritual texts and music. Contact the Office of Evangelization for guidelines.*

Gathering

Ministers of Hospitality *(Those who greet all who enter, assist in seating, and provide worship aids.)*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Prelude (music) _____

Prior to the liturgy and while the assembly are being seated, instrumental or choral music may accompany this action in order to create an atmosphere that is both festive and reverent. There should be a definite break between the Prelude and the Gathering or Entrance song.

Cantor _____ Accompanist _____

Optional Choir _____ Optional Instrumentalists _____

Order of Liturgical Procession *Confirmandi process in with Sponsors. As they walk forward allow enough space between those in front and behind so that the procession does not stop and start; it should look like one procession. All reverence the altar table with a bow and enter pews from side aisle.*

Thurifer (*Incense bearer*) _____

Crucifer (*Cross bearer*) _____

2 Acolytes (*Candle bearers*) _____

Lector (*Book*) _____

Confirmandi & Sponsors

Provide a separate list of all confirmandi with their home addresses

Confirmation Catechists _____

Optional 2 Additional Acolytes (*Candle bearers, who may also serve as Mitre & Crosier bearers*)

Chrism (*Oil bearer*) _____

Priest(s) _____

Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, OMI

Deacons _____

Brother Craig Bonham, OMI with minister assisting with Mitre, and Pastoral staff

Introductory Rite

Gathering Song *The song chosen should create an atmosphere of celebration in praise of God. When the Archbishop arrives at the altar, he incenses the Altar table. The Entrance Song or background music should accompany the incensation.*

(music) _____

Greeting Archbishop

Welcome The Pastor or Parish Administrator may wish to make some welcoming comments after the Greeting by the Archbishop sign of the cross.

Sprinkling Rite (*Music, either sung or instrumental, should accompany the Rite of Sprinkling, taking into account the baptismal symbolism of the ritual action. The Glory to God may be the song accompanying the Rite of Sprinkling.*)

(music) _____

Glory to God (music) _____

Liturgy of the Word Members of the confirmation class may proclaim the readings. The aim should be a proclamation of the Word of God, not a reading of the scriptures. As in every liturgy, a period of reflective silence should follow the readings, before the Responsorial Psalm & Gospel Acclamation.

First Reading _____

Proclaimed by (lector) _____

Responsorial Psalm _____

The Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation should be sung.

Sung response by (cantor) _____

Second Reading _____

Proclaimed by (lector) _____

Gospel Acclamation (music) _____

Gospel _____

Proclaimed by (deacon/priest) _____

If a Deacon is not available, one of the Priests proclaims the Gospel. The priest or deacon receives a blessing from the Archbishop while the Bishop is seated. Incensation of the Book takes place in the normal manner. The Book of Gospels is brought back to the Archbishop for reverencing after the proclamation of the Gospel has been completed. ***All remain standing until the Bishop has revered the Gospel book.***

Rite of Confirmation *(Following the Gospel, the pastor, administrator, deacon or designated catechists makes the official presentation in these or similar words:)*

Presentation of the Candidates

Presentation made by _____

Archbishop Schwietz, the parish community of <parish name here> wishes to present to you its young men and women [and adult candidates] who have prepared and are ready to receive the fullness of Christian Initiation in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate has been well instructed and is accompanied by a sponsor. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time. I invite the candidates for Confirmation to please stand as they are called by name.

The candidates stand as the presenter reads each one's name. They remain standing until the entire group has been presented. The Archbishop welcomes the Candidates and invites Candidates to be seated for his Homily.

Homily Archbishop *(Communicate any information with this package regarding the parish or the Confirmandi that might be helpful to the Archbishop in preparing his homily.)* The Archbishop may involve the Confirmandi to some extent in his Homily. The Candidates are expected to have tested their knowledge of Church teaching as found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church by going to the website: <http://www.usccb.org/catechism/quizzes/index.htm>

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises *After the homily, the Archbishop will direct the Confirmandi to stand in their place. ONLY THE CANDIDATES TO BE CONFIRMED STAND. The Archbishop leads the renewal with the following form: (Please prepare them to respond in a loud clear voice: "I DO!" to the five promises led by the Archbishop)*

Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: I DO!

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: I DO!

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: I DO!

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?

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: I DO!

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

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: I DO!

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

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: AMEN.

The Imposition of Hands *The pastor and any concelebrating priests (if they are to join the Archbishop in conferring the Sacrament) are to stand by the Archbishop. The confirmandi remain standing as the Archbishop says:*

My dear friends: in Baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to his chosen sons and daughters. Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

*A brief moment of silence follows. The Archbishop and priests (they join the Archbishop) then extend their hands over the group while the Archbishop **alone** says:*

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

CONFIRMANDI RESPOND: AMEN.

The Anointing with Chrism The Candidates with their sponsors come forward to the Archbishop in front of the altar table. The pastor or deacon assists the Archbishop by holding the Chrism. An appointed photographer may stand by in such a manner as to avoid obstructing the view of the assembly.

Music (optional) _____

The Anointing with Chrism is accompanied by a dialogue between the Bishop and Candidate. Only very soft, background instrumental music should accompany this rite—but no singing, in order not to render inaudible the words spoken by the Bishop and the candidate.

As each candidate stands before the Archbishop they give their confirmation name **only**. The sponsor does NOT present the candidate or give the confirmation name. While standing behind the candidate, the sponsor places his/her right hand on the shoulder of the candidate as the Archbishop confers the Sacrament by making the sign of the cross with Chrism on the candidate's forehead saying:

N. be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

CONFIRMAND RESPONDS: AMEN.

Peace be with you.

CONFIRMAND RESPONDS: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

In order that the fullness of the sacramental signs may be evident, the Chrism is **Not** to be wiped off the foreheads of the newly confirmed.

The newly confirmed return to their pews with their sponsors. Following the anointing, the servers wash the Archbishop's hands with water, slice of lemon (or handi-wipe) and a towel.

General Intercessions see page 9 *(A sung response would be appropriate for this occasion.)*

Proclaimed by _____

Response (Read / Sung) _____

OR Litany of Saints (music) _____

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts (music) _____

(Instrumental music is appropriate during the Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts and should continue through the incensation of the altar and gifts.)

presented by _____

(It is appropriate that two or three of the newly-confirmed present the gifts of the people (bread, wine, optional gifts for the poor, collection) to the Archbishop.) If there is a collection, the procession of gifts takes place following the collection. Archbishop will incense the altar and gifts.

Eucharistic Prayer The decision about which Eucharist Prayer to pray is reserved to the Archbishop. The *Eucharistic Prayers for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions* are particularly appropriate for Confirmation.

Eucharistic Acclamations *(The acclamations of the Eucharistic prayer should be sung.)*

Preface Acclamation (music) _____

Memorial Acclamation (music) _____

Great Amen (music) _____

Lord's Prayer (sung or recited) _____

Lamb of God Litany (music) _____

(This litany accompanies the Breaking of the Bread, thus the invocation and response should be repeated as long as the action demands.)

Communion Song (music) _____

(Communion Song should foster a sense of unity, be simple and not demand great effort)

Communion *Sufficient hosts for the Mass should be consecrated and hosts should not be taken from the tabernacle.*

Ministers of the Body of Christ Archbishop _____

Body of Christ _____

Blood of Christ _____

Blood of Christ _____

Silent Reflection *Sufficient quiet time should be planned after Communion. The use of this time solely for additional music or hymns is to be discouraged. If a meditation hymn is included, sufficient silent time should also be included.*

Prayer After Communion

Concluding Rite As soon as the Archbishop begins to bow and turns for the recessional, the newly confirmed and their sponsors reverence the altar table with a slight bow from their pews.

Final Blessing

Sending Forth Hymn/Song _____

Recessional The ministers leave in the order given for the Gathering processional. The newly confirmed follow immediately behind the Archbishop in the recessional. *(The Book of Gospels and the Chrism are NOT recessed.)*

Postlude _____

Parts of the liturgy, which are to be sung by the Archbishop, should be clearly indicated.

Group Photo with Archbishop *Gather newly confirmed*

Coordinator _____ Location _____

Individual Photos with Archbishop

Coordinator _____ Location _____

Reception

Coordinator _____ Location _____

Three Weeks Before the Date of Confirmation

1. **Three (3) copies of this completed Liturgical Preparation Guide** *(pages 3-8 only)*
2. **The Letters from each candidate addressed to the Archbishop**
3. **List of the names and addresses of all candidates**

Send to: OFFICE OF EVANGELIZATION, 225 Cordova Street - Anchorage, AK 99501

You may also want to make copies of this planner for your Pastor, Confirmation Leader, Sacristan, Music Ministers and others as needed.

General Intercessions



It is appropriate that the newly confirmed proclaim the intercessions. It would also be appropriate to gather input from the candidates in composing specific prayers. Four to five intercessions are the norm. A sung response is encouraged.

The Ritual for Confirmation offers the following suggestions:

Archbishop:

My dear friends; let us be one in prayer to God our Father as we are one in the faith, hope and love his Spirit gives.

Lector:

For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love: let us pray to the Lord.

Response:

Lector:

For their parents and godparents who led them in faith, that by word and example they may always encourage them to follow the way of Jesus Christ: let us pray to the Lord.

Response:

Lector:

For the Holy Church of God in union with John Paul our Pope, Roger our Archbishop, and all the bishops that God, who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit, may help us grow in unity of faith and love until His Son returns in glory: let us pray to the Lord.

Response:

Lector:

For all people, of every race and nation, that they may acknowledge the one God as Father, and in the bond of common discipleship seek His kingdom, which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit: let us pray to the Lord.

Response:

Archbishop:

God our Father, you sent your Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and through them and their successors you give the Spirit to your people. May his work begin at Pentecost continue to grow in the hearts of all who believe. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All Respond: Amen.

Sacristy Preparation for the Celebration of Confirmation



A designated sacristan should attend to the following details:

1. **Vestments:** **WHITE** for Sunday Vigil, Sunday and Solemnity Masses during the Easter Season (excluding Pentecost, which is **RED**). White or Red Vestments for weekdays. The Presiding Bishop will normally bring his own vestment.
2. **Presider's Chair:** The Presidential chair is to be located in a place that is visible to the entire assembly. Chairs for concelebrating priests may be set in the sanctuary, but preferably not on either side of the Bishop. If there is a deacon, he is to be seated to the right of the Bishop. Altar Servers do not sit next to the Bishop. A chair should be provided for the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies positioned near the servers.
3. **Microphone:** A standing microphone should be in place at the Presider's chair with a cord sufficiently long to extend to the first pews of the assembly. If the parish is equipped with wireless microphones, then one of these should be available for the Bishop in the place in which he is to vest.
4. **Ritual Books:** The following should be available before the Liturgy begins:
 - + **LECTIONARY:** Carried in the entrance procession by the lector, unless the Book of the Gospel is used which is carried by a Deacon.
 - + **BOOK OF THE GOSPELS:** If used, it is carried by the deacon and is placed flat upon the altar. In this case, the Lectionary should be in place on the ambo before the Mass begins.
 - + **ROMAN MISSAL:** Please refer to Part II, section 3 for proper set up of the texts.
(Note: Archbishop will provide the Roman Pontifical for the Confirmation Rite.)
5. **Credence Table:** A large credence table is necessary, holding:
 - a large bowl of water;
 - special branch for the Sprinkling Rite at beginning of Mass;
 - corporal for the altar; chalice and purificator for the Bishop;
 - extra chalices or cups with purificators for the assembly's Communion;
 - empty ciboria—sufficient number for the orderly distribution of the Body of Christ;
 - thurible, charcoal, and incense;
 - cruet of water;
 - one lemon, quartered, and a towel for the Archbishop (or some HandiWipes);
 - pitcher of water, bowl and two towels to wash the Archbishop's hands twice (after the Anointing, and during the offertory).
6. **Table for the Gifts:** The table is located in the nave of the Church. One or two large ciboria with a sufficient number of hosts for the celebration and a flagon or flagons of wine sufficient for all who will be receiving Communion. Use of Pre-consecrated hosts from the Tabernacle is discouraged for this celebration.
7. **Easter Candle near the Ambo or Font**
8. **Baptismal Font**
9. **Parking for the Archbishop**

Rehearsal Preparation for Confirmation



Please rehearse the ceremony within the context of prayer with all candidates and their Sponsors a day or two in advance.

1. **General Behavior and Dress:** Kindly review the need for full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy with a dignified reverence due the occasion.
2. **Basic Order of the Mass and The Rite of Confirmation**
3. **Gathering Rite:** The Entrance procession including where the pre-celebration line up will be, and where the sponsors are to assemble. Address before hand if one of those to be confirmed will process in with the parish's Chrism Vessel.
4. **Renewal of Baptismal Promises:** Rehearse the promises and the responses.
5. **Processions:** Entrance Procession; Procession from pew to Archbishop for Confirmation; Procession returning back to pew; Presentation of the Gifts Procession; Communion Procession; and the Recessional.
6. **Responses:** Practice the responses to the Archbishop at the Anointing and to the Greeting of Peace after Chrismation.
7. **Confirmation Names:** Each Candidate will explicitly and loudly state their confirmation name for the Archbishop at the appropriate time the Sponsors do not present the Candidate to the Archbishop.
8. **Appropriate Dress:** suitable to the solemnity and sacredness of the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the presence of the Archbishop and because of the communal nature of sacraments, this is not the time for self-expression in attire. The stole is the distinctive garb of the ordained minister; garments resembling a stole should not be worn by the Confirmation candidate.
9. **Lector Rehearsal:** It is important that the proclamation of the Readings are rehearsed well in advance of the celebration at the AMBO, the Table of the Word, with the sound system. If the Confirmandi proclaim the General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful), they should be rehearsed. Should the parish chose to use a Litany of Saints for the celebration, the Litany may take the place of the General Intercessions. However, in NO case should any other action take place during the Litany of Saints.
10. **Celebration:** Remember that the Rite of Confirmation is a glad celebration.
"You are sealed with the oil of gladness and the ointment of understanding, by whom you were declared to be the children of light, by whom the Lord in your illumination testified by the imposition of the Bishop's hands" (*Apostolic Constitutions 2:4:32 [C.E. 400]*).
11. **Photos, Video, & Cell Phones:** A single person should be designated as photographer or videographer. Individual photos are not allowed during the celebration because it detracts from the Sacredness of the moment. Everyone needs to be reminded to turn off cellular phones and pagers.
12. **Arrival Time and Location:** Inform the candidates and their parents of their arrival time and location to assemble. Inform the sponsors of their arrival time, place of gathering, and pews reserved for them.