

FAQ:

Why do we now wait to confirm youth until they are at least 15 years of age?

Confirmation is rite of discipleship, not a rite of passage. It asks an individual to make a mature commitment to both their faith community and to God. This sacrament therefore, needs to take place at a time when a person can make this commitment out of a process of faith formation:

- ❖ Formation that comes from being an active part of a faith community, including that which comes from attending and participating in worship and education programs.
- ❖ Formation that comes from experiences of outreach to the greater community and world.

Developmentally we know that the late teens are the minimum age that a mature faith commitment like this can typically be made. A younger child is just not able to assimilate and integrate faith concepts and life principles at a deep enough level. Younger teens are at a stage of questioning everything, not affirming. And there are practical limitations such as no one can vote in parishes or at diocesan at Convention until the age of 16, and most mission programs allow only minimal participation by youth who are younger than 16. In many ways, older is better.

It is incumbent upon the local faith community to prayerfully and consistently lead, teach and engage youth on their journey. As a diocese, we are also working to provide meaningful and supportive opportunities that will nurture our young people's growth in faith. We hope that our efforts will assist congregations in bringing those who choose confirmation, to a place where they experience the sacrament as a life changing and faith deepening encounter.

For resources on faith development see:

CALLED TO TEACH AND LEARN, Part III, chapters 11-13.

(published by the Episcopal Church)

WILL OUR CHILDREN HAVE FAITH by John Westerhoff.

(revised edition, Morehouse, 2002)

For information on diocesan guidelines and resources for confirmation, including suggestions for “in-betweeners” (pre-teens and younger teens), go to: www.education.ang-md.org/confirm