

2006 Guidelines for Confirmation **in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland**

Regarding Confirmation, Reception, Baptism, and Reaffirmation:

- Candidates who have been Baptized in any denominational background and who wish to affirm their faith as adults shall be presented for **Confirmation**. Candidates who have been Confirmed previously by a bishop in the historic succession (Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or Eastern Orthodox) may be presented for **Reception** into the Episcopal Church during a service of Confirmation.
- **Baptisms** will **not** be part of Diocesan Confirmations. Candidates who have not been baptized and are desirous of Confirmation will first be baptized in their parish church.
- **Reaffirmation** will normally **not** be part of Diocesan Confirmations, as the form does not require a Bishop and may be administered by a priest. Persons desiring to make Reaffirmation (having been Confirmed or Received previously in the Episcopal Church) are encouraged to do so in the context of a service in their parish church. Special exception may be made by the Bishop and will depend generally on how many persons are scheduled as Candidates. Reaffirmations may take place at a Bishop's Parish Visitation; doing so needs to be cleared with the Bishop in advance of the Visitation.

Regarding Preparation:

- A period of preparation, should take place in the parish which includes the basics of the Christian Faith and the Anglican expression of it as described in the *Customary on Confirmation*, and each candidate should be of such maturity as to be able to make meaningful vows that impact their lives. Therefore, the **minimum age recommended by the Diocese of Maryland is 15**. Requests for exceptions should be directed to the Missioner for Youth.
- All candidates are asked to participate in one of the four **Bishops' Teaching Days OR the overnight lock-in**. Please see the enclosed information sheet.
- On the web site (www.education.ang-md.org, click "Confirmation") you will find a thorough collection of resources to assist in preparing candidates for this important affirmation of faith. The Diocesan Missioners for Christian Education and Youth Ministry are available to help you select, design and deliver appropriate programs for preparation.

Regarding Scheduling and Logistics:

- Services are scheduled during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. There are four dates set aside for diocesan confirmations at the Cathedral of the Incarnation, in addition to the Easter Vigil. Several other diocesan regional confirmations are arranged in various locations around the diocese.

- Occasionally, for specific needs, churches may select an additional date within the great fifty days for confirmations in their regions. After consultation with the Bishops, a mutually acceptable date on a Saturday or weekday evening can be chosen for these. If necessary, it is also possible (in consultation with the Bishops) to schedule individual confirmations at the Tuesday noon Eucharist at the Cathedral during the fifty days.
 - Confirmations are to be celebrated as **Diocesan Confirmations**, not as special events highlighting a particular church. Therefore, confirmations are **never** held on Sunday morning, or in the context of any Parish Visitation, and should **not** be scheduled in conjunction with another parish event. Individual parish confirmations *may* be deemed appropriate only after a conversation with one of the Bishops. For example, a request might be made in order to accommodate candidates who participate in the *Journey to Adulthood*® program in their parish.
 - As soon as possible, each rector is asked to please **contact Ashby DeLashmutt** in the Bishops' office to reserve all dates and times. It is a good idea to have alternate dates in mind in case your first choice is taken.
 - Whether celebrating at the Cathedral or at a church within your region, confirmation services are **not to exceed 75 persons**. Any church within the region may be used for the service, so long as it is large enough to accommodate the expected numbers. **When you register for a particular service, please include the number of candidates that you anticipate presenting.**
 - Approximately six weeks before each service, a coordinator (Minister of Ceremonies), whose job it is to coordinate the service, will be appointed by the Bishop from one of the parishes participating in the service. Complete instructions will be sent to each coordinator. The Coordinator will work closely with the Office of the Bishop and be responsible for attending to the details, such as:
 - be in touch with the Cathedral or host parish about the details of planning and use of the space,
 - coordinate the service (altar guild, organist, choir, etc.),
 - be sure bulletins are prepared, copied, and distributed, (a template will be provided.)
 - recruit volunteers as needed to be ushers, Eucharistic ministers, oblationers, etc.,
 - be sure that arrangements are in place for a reception following the service
 - serve as Minister of Ceremonies during the service, and
 - be in touch with the Office of the Bishop and provide the officiating Bishop with copies of the order of service well in advance of the service.
- The Office of the Bishop will
- coordinate the schedule,
 - provide Confirmation Certificates and registration sheets, and
 - other tasks as assigned / requested by the Bishops.

Regarding the Liturgy:

- **One full hour** before the scheduled time for the service, all candidates and sponsors are asked to meet with the Bishop to reflect upon the Baptismal Covenant vows which they are about to affirm. It is expected that **all participants**, including their sponsors, will attend this hour. This time will **not** be used for rehearsal; each presenting priest is expected to rehearse members of his/her congregation prior to coming for the Diocesan Confirmation.
- All services will be in the context of Holy Eucharist Rite II.
- Normally, Eucharistic Prayers A, B, or C are used. Special permission may be given by the Bishop to use Eucharistic Prayer D or Alternative Consecration prayers.
- Please **NOTE** that this year, the following **Propers for Confirmation** will be used at every diocesan confirmation service:

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Romans 12:1-8

Matthew 5:1-12

- Liturgical color is to be that of the season or festival.
- Clergy will normally stand at the altar during the celebration of Eucharist. The Coordinator will arrange for a Deacon to read the Gospel, set the table, and give the dismissal. Laity from participating churches will be asked by the Coordinator to read lessons and lead the Baptismal Litany.

Other Related Items:

- Candidates for Confirmation and Reception will **sit together by parish**; they need not be in alphabetical order.
- At the Presentation (BCP page 415), each Rector/Vicar and the Sponsors will stand in the order listed in the Bulletin and introduce his/her people using the appropriate words, first saying, “On behalf of ___ Church, I present...”
- Those presented stand and continue to stand until **all** Confirmands and those being Received have been presented.
- Those standing will be asked two questions (BCP page 415) and are expected to answer **clearly and loudly**.
- Bishop Rabb prefers to **sit** for Confirmations; Bishop Ihloff **stands**. In the former case, there will be a kneeling cushion placed before the seated Bishop on which Confirmands will kneel; in the latter, a kneeling bench (where possible) will be provided for the Confirmands.
- At the time of Confirmation, the Sponsor(s) will come forward from the congregation sequentially as their turn comes. Individually, Confirmands and those being received come forward. Confirmands **kneel** before the Bishop; those being Received **remain standing**. Family and friend are invited to stand behind and around the candidate. The candidate says in a loud and clear voice: “My name is ____ and I want to be Confirmed / Received.”

- The full baptismal name is to be given (omitting the last name); the Bishop uses this name to Confirm or Receive the candidate. The candidate then returns to his/her pew, entering if possible from the side aisle thus allowing the next candidate to enter the center aisle.
- There is to be **no grouping** of candidates, no classes coming forward together, and no unnecessary crowding of the sanctuary. This is a time for individual candidates to be surrounded by those who have a direct relationship with and interest in their confirmation or reception. The exception to this is when more than one member of a family (husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, etc.) are being presented. Such persons are expected to come together and are likely to have the same group of surrounding supporters. The Sponsor(s) will stand beside the Bishop and return to his/her place when the last of his/her candidates has been Confirmed or Received.