

Sacramental Preparation Requirements

Canon Laws 777, 913, 914 and 989

Can 777 – In a special way, the parish priest is to ensure, in accordance with the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop, that:

1. an adequate catechesis is given for the celebration of the sacraments;
2. children are properly prepared for first confession and first holy communion, and for the sacrament of confirmation, by means of catechetical formation over an appropriate period of time;
3. children, after they have made their first holy communion, are given a richer and deeper catechetical formation;
4. as far as their condition allows, catechetical formation is given to the mentally and physically handicapped;
5. the faith of young people and of adults is strengthened, enlightened and developed by various catechetical methods and initiatives .

Can 913 – For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

Can 914 – It is the responsibility, in the first place, of parents and those who take the place of parents as well as of the pastor to see that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by this divine food as early as possible, preceded by sacramental confession; it is also for the pastor to be vigilant lest any children come to the Holy Banquet who have not had the use of reason or whom he judges are not sufficiently disposed.

- Desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist
- Recognize the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- Understand that in the Eucharist, bread and wine are changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ.

Can 989 – After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year.

Children of Catechetical Age (RCIC)

(from Appendix III: National Statutes for the Catechumenate)

18. Since children who have reached the use of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (canon 852:1), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens.

19. Some elements of the ordinary catechetical instruction of baptized children before their reception of the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist may be appropriately shared with catechumens of catechetical age. Their condition and status as catechumens, however, should not be compromised or confused, nor should they receive the sacraments of initiation in any sequence other than that determined in the ritual of Christian initiation.

Requirements for Eucharist

The Church asks that baptized children who are to celebrate First Holy Communion....

- ❖ have celebrated the Sacrament of Penance;
 - Note: This is the norm for the Diocese of Rockford.
 - It is stated in the Catechism (#1457): “Children must go to the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.” (This references Code of Canon Law #914).
- ❖ recognize the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist;
- ❖ understand how the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ;
- ❖ and, desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

Requirements for Confirmation

Code of Canon Law #889

“All baptized persons who have not been confirmed, and only they, are capable of receiving Confirmation. Outside of danger of death...it is required that one have the use of reason, be suitably prepared, properly disposed, and able to renew one’s baptismal promises.”

Diocese of Rockford norms

- ❖ Age: Bishop Malloy’s official decree dated May 19, 2013, states, “The age of those to be confirmed in the Diocese of Rockford will be established as norm for individuals who are in the 7th, 8th or 9th grade.”
- ❖ Requirements of Sacramental Program: see section on content
- ❖ What is not required?
 - hours of service
 - retreat day or day of recollection
 - letter to the Bishop

It is Bishop Malloy’s desire that artificial impediments not be created in our programs for Confirmation.

Your Parish

Determine how many years, and which grade levels, of formal catechetical instruction need to be completed and which grade level student needs to be currently enrolled in.

Other Requirements for Confirmation

Confirmation Name

- ❖ If the student is already named after a Saint, he/she may use their baptismal name or may select another Saint's name to honor that person.
- ❖ If the student was not named after a Saint, he/she must select one for their Confirmation name.
- ❖ The name selected must be one the student admires or appreciates, one who shows a particular spiritual strength or gift, perhaps someone who took a strong stand for their faith, a commitment to serving the poor, a prayerful life, or a dedication to social justice. It should be a Saint, a Blessed, or a biblical hero.
- ❖ The name does not have to be gender-specific.

Confirmation Sponsor

- ❖ The sponsor witnesses the commitment to Christ the student is making. Ideally, the sponsor should be one of the Baptismal sponsors / godparents.
- ❖ The sponsor must be at least 16 years of age and already received the sacrament of Confirmation, as well as be a practicing Catholic.
- ❖ The sponsor cannot be a parent.
- ❖ The sponsor does not have to be the same gender as the Candidate.

Letter to the Pastor

- ❖ Your parish may ask the students to write a letter to their Pastor formally requesting the sacrament of Confirmation.
- ❖ The letter should reveal their Confirmation name and sponsor, and the reasons he/she would like to be confirmed.

Program Content – Eucharist

(from Diocese of Rockford Curriculum Guidelines for 2nd graders)

Content areas to be “mastered” include:

- ❖ define the Sacrament of Eucharist
- ❖ know these terms: Lord’s Supper, breaking of the bread, Holy Communion
- ❖ tell the story of the Last Supper

Content areas to be “developed” include:

- ❖ Jesus’ life, parables, and miracles
- ❖ know who the Holy Spirit is
- ❖ Communion of Saints
- ❖ name the 7 sacraments
- ❖ define the Sacrament of Baptism and know something about it
- ❖ realize Christ’s presence in the Eucharist
- ❖ know who may receive the Eucharist (the conditions for receiving Holy Communion worthily)
- ❖ understand why we kneel and genuflect
- ❖ know about Holy Orders and the roles of bishop, priest, deacon
- ❖ know the family is the domestic church
- ❖ know what sacramental are
- ❖ describe the importance of going to Mass
- ❖ identify ways to keep the Lord’s Day holy

Master all the basic prayers

Program Content – Reconciliation

(from Diocese of Rockford Curriculum Guidelines for 2nd graders)

Concept area to be “mastered”:

- ❖ describe the way God acts as a loving parent

Content areas to be “developed” in areas of morality, sin and penance include:

- ❖ define a child’s obligations to the 4th Commandment
- ❖ identify duties of children and parents
- ❖ explain why life is sacred
- ❖ explain teachings on respect for health
- ❖ explain moral obligation to take care of God’s creation
- ❖ define sin as making wrong choices (not accidents or mistakes) through the use of free will
- ❖ define truth and name various offenses against truth
- ❖ define purity and modesty

Master all basic prayers, including the traditional or contemporary Act of Contrition.

Know the steps of the Rite of Reconciliation.

Program Content – Confirmation

Sacramental preparation for Confirmation consists of 6 – 9 months of formal instruction during which students study the fundamentals of the faith, with special attention to the nature and purpose of the baptismal character already received, and specific details about the nature and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Specifically, from the Curriculum Guidelines for High School:

Sacraments

II. B. Confirmation

1. Holy Spirit and Pentecost
2. Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
3. The Rite of Confirmation
4. The Effects of Confirmation
5. Recipients and Ministers of Confirmation

This section refers the catechist to corresponding **Catechism** paragraphs.

In addition, from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- ❖ Part I, section I, chapter 3: paragraphs 142-165
- ❖ Part II, section 2, chapter 1: paragraphs 1210-1419

Study guide questions are provided by the Diocese of Rockford, but these are guides only. They include general questions, such as, What is Confirmation? How does the Bishop confirm? Why does the Church encourage us to receive this sacrament?