

About This Section

PART SIX • Preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist (Restored Order)

This section is for those parishes that celebrate the restored order of the initiation sacraments and celebrate Confirmation and Eucharist together or Confirmation prior to Eucharist.

This section includes:

- **Initial Letter to Parents**

- **The Restored Order:**

- **The Historical and Theological Vision**

- This handout can be used with parents and catechists to help them better understand the celebration of the restored order of the initiation sacraments.

- **An Optional Chapter:
We Are Sealed with the Spirit**

- This lesson is included for those parishes that celebrate Confirmation and Eucharist together and would like an additional resource for their preparation period.
 - This optional lesson can be used immediately after chapter 1, “We Belong.” Or it can be used at the end of the preparation program.

- The optional chapter for younger children begins on page 140 of this manual. It is followed by guide notes for catechists and guide notes for parents.

- The optional chapter for older children begins on page 154 of this manual. It is followed by guide notes for catechists and guide notes for parents.

- **Celebrating Confirmation**

- **Role of Godparents and Sponsors**

- This handout can be used with parents and catechists.

- **Frequently Asked Questions**

- This handout can be used with parents and catechists to help them better understand the celebration of the restored order of the initiation sacraments.

- **Moving Toward Restored Order**

- When you have young people preparing only for Confirmation, you will find the suggestions on this page helpful.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is our parish celebrating Confirmation and First Communion at the same event?

In the early Church Christian initiation was celebrated together as a single event. The person was immersed into the waters of Baptism, anointed with chrism, and shared in the eucharistic meal. Over time, and for many reasons, the celebration of these sacramental rituals became separated from one another.

In the renewal of the sacraments that was mandated by the Second Vatican Council, the Church was invited to restore the celebrations of the sacraments of Christian initiation to their original order—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. This restored order helps us recognize that sharing in the Eucharist completes our initiation into the Church.

What does the Church say about linking these two sacraments?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* articulates the inseparable nature of the Sacraments of Initiation as follows: “Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ” (CCC 1275).

Doesn’t the Church require a certain age for Confirmation?

Both the *Rite of Confirmation* (11) and the *Code of Canon Law* (Canon 891) set the age of discretion (age seven) as the age for Confirmation. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has named a broad range of ages—between the ages of eight and eighteen. Within that range, local bishops may determine their own diocesan policy. Thus, the age for Confirmation may vary from diocese to diocese, sometimes even from parish to parish.

Regardless of age, Confirmation is always a Sacrament of Initiation. The important thing to remember is that sacraments are not about age alone; they are about growing in faith, about sharing in God’s grace.

How will my child be preparing for Confirmation?

In the restored order Confirmation preparation is integrated into the preparation for first Eucharist. The close connection between Baptism and Confirmation is emphasized and the importance of Eucharist as the culmination of Christian initiation is recognized.

Will my child be learning about the Holy Spirit?

Naturally, as your child continues to participate in religious education, he or she will continue to learn more and more about the Holy Spirit’s action in our lives. Your child’s *Eucharist* book teaches about the power of the Holy Spirit and the special Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Just as your child was first empowered by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, your child will continue to grow in the Holy Spirit through the grace of Confirmation.

How will I know if my child is ready for Confirmation?

Readiness for Confirmation cannot be separated from readiness for first Eucharist, and sacrament readiness is never just about learning; but, more significantly, it is about faith. As your child prepares for Confirmation and first Eucharist, here are three things to keep in mind:

- Sacraments are always a beginning. As your child matures in faith, he or she will grow in his or her understanding of Confirmation and experience of the Eucharist.
- The Eucharist is the culmination of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Your child is now welcomed as a fully participating member of the Church.
- At any age, completion of the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—in no way signals graduation. Rather it is the beginning of a lifetime of being nourished at the table of the Lord.