

WHAT IS READINESS?

When speaking of the readiness of a child to celebrate a sacrament, there are three areas to address: the family, the individual, and the parish community.

Family: *primary place of child's formation*

- Does your family participate in the life of the community in the areas of worship, formation, and service?
- Has your child received appropriate formation for his/her age?
- Does your family pray together at home?
- As parents, are you willing to commit to the continuing formation of your child in worship, formation, and service?

A candidate's readiness *involves the following:*

- A person must be baptized and have the use of reason (about the age of seven).
- Developmentally disabled persons should be confirmed after appropriate catechesis. If catechesis is not possible, he/she should be confirmed.
- Does the person express a desire to celebrate Confirmation?
- Does the candidate participate in the worship life (Eucharist) of the community regularly?
- Has the person been formed in faith in an age-appropriate manner?
- Is there a commitment from this person to continue formation and participation in the worship life of the community?

*Because sacraments are community celebrations, the **parish** also has a responsibility in sacramental preparation.*

- Does your parish provide you (parents) with necessary support and information to enable you to fulfill your role as primary educator of your child?
- Does your parish provide opportunities for life-long faith formation?
- Does the community welcome children into its life?
- Retreats and service projects are a necessary part of the formation.

The Role of the Sponsor

- Sponsors are to have an active role in the preparation of the candidate.
- Sponsors must be 16 years of age or older, Catholic, confirmed, leading a life in conformity with the faith, who has received Eucharist, and who is not bound by any canonical penalty.
- He/she must be willing and able to share faith and to make the necessary time commitment to fulfill his/her responsibility.
- Parents may not be godparents or sponsors for their children. They have a particular and very important role as primary catechists of their children.



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

**Office of
Christian Formation**
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Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation.

“The sacraments of Christian initiation constitute a unity because ‘they establish the foundations of the Christian life. The faithful born anew by Baptism are strengthened by Confirmation and nourished by the Eucharist.”

(Directory for Catechesis 70)

Confirmation Through History

In the first centuries of the Church, Confirmation and Baptism were celebrated at same time. When people were baptized, they emerged from the water and the new life they received was sealed by an anointing with oil (chrismation) by the bishop. At the same celebration, they were welcomed to the table of the Eucharist for the first time.

Early in the Church, a custom developed for the anointing of the newly baptized by the priest immediately after baptism, followed by a second anointing performed by the bishop. The western Church has reserved these two anointings, one by the priest or deacon at baptism and the other at confirmation by the bishop.

Throughout the centuries, the time between baptism and confirmation has grown until confirmation was celebrated around the age of 14. Eucharist was still celebrated after confirmation. In 1910, Pope Pius X lowered the age of reception of Eucharist to the age of reason but did not set a new age for Confirmation.

The Order of Confirmation (2016) has been revised. The Order permits the Conference of Bishops to designate the age when confirmation will be celebrated. The

U.S. Bishops have stated that the Sacrament may be conferred anytime between the ages of 7 and 18 with each bishop establishing the norm for his diocese. The norm in the Diocese of St. Augustine is eighth grade and up.

The catechesis for Christian initiation is a: *basic, essential, systematic, and integral formation* in the faith. It has as its foundation the Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.

“Catechesis makes the initial conversion ripen and helps Christians to give complete meaning to their existence, education them in a *mentality of faith* in keeping with the Gospel, to the point of gradually coming to feel, think, and act like Christ.” (Directory for Catechesis 77)

Sacramental Policies for the Diocese of St. Augustine

The Diocese of St. Augustine establishes the following requirements for the celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation, first penance, and first Eucharist for School Aged Children as follows:

1. Ongoing remote preparation is essential prior to sacramental catechesis.
2. Readiness of candidates is determined through consultation with parents, catechists, pastor and candidates.
3. Remote preparation is provided through a Parish Faith Formation Program, a Catholic School or a

home school programs during their regular classroom for their grade level. All programs mentioned will utilize the same textbook for consistency and continuity from the approved U.S.C.C.B. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) conformity list. The choice of textbook (s) is reported to the Office of Christian Formation.

4. Immediate preparation for the sacraments includes these same youth joining together for a minimum of six (6) hours, and a maximum of twelve (12) hours for each sacrament for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. For Confirmation, 18-24 hours is denoted and that includes a retreat. Sacramental catechesis takes place outside the regular classroom.
5. Since full initiation is the norm for all Catholics, persons with special needs (families with unique needs, including physical, emotional and mental disabilities but not limited to these circumstances) are to be included as much as possible within all formation, training and participation of sacraments.
6. Parents and other role models are encouraged to act as witnesses by their regular participation in church life within the parish.
7. The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. A privileged time and place for the sacraments is the Sunday assembly.