



CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Diocese of Alexandria

The celebration of the sacrament of confirmation is a significant moment in the life of the parish. It is important that the liturgy be carefully and appropriately prepared. The pastor or his delegate is to complete the attached [planning sheet](#) and return it to the Office of the Bishop no later than *two weeks* before the liturgy. Also, if there are confirmation certificates for the bishop to sign, they should also be received *two weeks* prior to the liturgy. For questions regarding the ceremony, please call or email Deacon Richard Mitchell (dcnrmithell@diocesealex.org) or 318-445-2401 ext. 206.

The liturgy is to be celebrated according to the Rite of Confirmation. Ceremonies not included in the liturgical Rite of Confirmation, such as the distribution of individual certificates after the anointing with chrism, or other non-liturgical devotional rites, are not permitted. They distract and detract from the rich ritual of the sacrament itself and unduly prolong the liturgy.

Scripture Reading and Liturgical prayers: For Mass readings and settings, please note GIRM 372

Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on Solemnities, on the days within the Octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week, and furthermore due regard is to be had for the norms set out in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves."

If confirmation is held during the Saturday Vigil, Sunday Mass, or a day listed above, the readings proper for that day must be used. On other days, the Mass of Confirmation will be used and the readings are to be selected from the Lectionary for the Ritual Mass of Confirmation. The preface will be one of the Prefaces of the Holy Spirit. The bishop will select the Eucharistic Prayer.

Liturgical Items: The bishop will ordinarily be accompanied by one of the Diocesan Masters of Ceremonies and will bring his necessary liturgical items to include: Chrism in its stock, Ritual of Confirmation, Miter and Crozier, Alb and Chasuble.

It would be helpful to have two additional servers who would be assigned to holding the miter and crozier. These two servers walk behind the bishop in both the entrance and recessional processions.

Photography: Photos (videotape or still) may be taken *in moderation* during the liturgy. A group photo and/or individual photos of the newly confirmed with the Bishop may be taken following the liturgy.

Proclamation of the Gospel: A deacon, if the parish enjoys the ministry of one, will proclaim the Gospel. If no deacon is present, the pastor or another priest will proclaim the Gospel.

Prior to the Ceremony: Before the Mass begins it would be helpful to have the candidates in a room, not in church, where the bishop may meet with them privately for about ten minutes before going to the church. This allows the bishop to be able to introduce himself to them before the celebration.

Arrangements of Candidates in church: It is preferable for the bishop to administer the sacrament at the candidate's pew. Therefore, if practical, it is recommended that the candidates sit in the seat nearest the aisle with the sponsor sitting next to him/her. Ideally only one candidate and sponsor per

pew (along with any family and/or friends). Please see attached diagram to aid with recommendation.

Introductory Rites: The opening song accompanies the procession of the ministers to the sanctuary and should continue throughout the incensation of the altar, if incense is used. The song may continue even after the bishop has reached the chair, if this seems fitting. The candidates may enter the church in the procession before the ministers.

Penitential Rite: If the Penitential Act option will be used, there are three options to select from: Option A – The Confiteor; Option B – “Have mercy on us, O Lord”; Option C – Dialogue with “Lord, have mercy”.

Or

The rite of blessing and sprinkling with holy water may be used in place of the Rite of Penance, especially during the Easter Season. For this rite, the pastor and deacon (if one is present) will sprinkle the congregation.

Note: the sprinkling and Rite of Penance are never used in the same liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Word: To demonstrate respect for the Word of God, the readings are to be proclaimed from the Lectionary (and the Book of the Gospels, if available). No loose-leaf binders, worship aids, or photocopies are to be used. It is encouraged that candidates for confirmation serve as the readers, except for the Gospel as mentioned above. At the end of the Gospel reading, the book is brought to the bishop to be venerated.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION:

Presentation of the Candidates: After the Gospel the pastor, another member of the clergy, or a catechist presents the candidates for confirmation. The candidates are to stand at their places when presented. They are to be introduced individually and remain standing until the bishop instructs them to be seated. The homily follows.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises: The renewal of baptismal promises is for the *candidates only*. They stand for the renewal, which takes the place of the Creed.

Imposition of Hands: After the baptismal promises have been renewed, the concelebrants stand near the bishop and he will invite all present to pray for the candidates. After praying silently for a short time, the bishop and the pastor (who will assist with the confirmation) will extend hands over the candidates. However, the bishop alone says the prayer.

Anointing with Chrism: The bishop, along with the pastor carrying the Crozier, and an assisting minister carrying the Sacred Chrism will approach the candidates for confirmation. Music, with or without singing, may accompany the anointing. However, if there is music, it should be played pianissimo (very softly) so the congregation can hear the words that are part of the sacramental anointing.

The candidate or sponsor announces the name of the candidate to the bishop. *No other dialogue is used.* Ordinarily, *only* the confirmation name is given. This may be the candidate’s own name or that of a saint chosen for confirmation.

As the bishop approaches the candidate, the sponsor places his/her right hand on the candidate’s right shoulder. The bishop will lay hands on and then anoint the forehead of the candidate with the words “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”. The newly confirmed responds: “*Amen*”. Next the

bishop says: “Peace be with you” and the response is: “And with your spirit.” Finally the bishop and newly confirmed will exchange the Kiss of Peace.

After all have been confirmed, the bishop will wash his hands at the credence table.

General Intercessions: A deacon, or another person may offer the intercessions. Intercessions may be recited or sung. If there is no deacon, it is recommended that one of the newly confirmed read the intercessions.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

At the presentation of the gifts, only bread and wine and the parish collection, if one is taken, are to be presented. If there are other items which are significant to those being confirmed, these items may be brought in during the entrance procession. They may *not* be included in the presentation of gifts, and they are never placed on the altar.

Sufficient bread and wine for all communicating at that liturgy should be prepared. If at all possible, the reserved sacrament from the tabernacle should *not* be used for the distribution of Holy Communion at the Mass. If the Eucharist is distributed under both species (encouraged), the additional chalices (preferably prefilled) are placed on the altar during the presentation of gifts.

Ordinary ministers of the Eucharist (bishop, priests and deacons) are to serve as ministers of Holy Communion. Only if there are not enough ordinary ministers may Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist in the distribution of Communion. All may receive Communion under both kinds in accord with the usual norms.

The bishop asks that purification of the sacred vessels take place at the Credence Table. (GIRM 279)

CONCLUDING RITES:

Episcopal Blessing: The Bishop will conclude the ceremony with the Concluding Rite below. If there will be a printed program, please include these responses to assist those who may not be familiar with this final blessing:

Bishop: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Response: *Now and forever*

Bishop: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Response: *Who made heaven and earth.*

Announcements: Announcements are made *after* the Prayer after Communion. This allows the Communion Rite to be completed before the Concluding Rite begins. It is appropriate for the pastor to recognize the priests and deacons who are present, and to thank those who have been involved in the confirmation preparation and celebration.

If a group photo is to be taken after Mass, the newly confirmed should remain in their places. The bishop will process out and immediately return to the sanctuary (or designated place) for the group photo. If no photos are to be taken, the newly confirmed may precede the bishop in the recessional, or they may remain in their pews.

The bishop will normally be available for a period after the celebration for additional photos and to greet the people of the parish.

Altar

Family / Sponsor / Candidate 1
Family / Sponsor / Candidate 2
Family / Sponsor / Candidate 3
Family / Sponsor / Candidate 4

Candidate 8/ Sponsor / Family
Candidate 7/ Sponsor / Family
Candidate 6/ Sponsor / Family
Candidate 5/ Sponsor / Family