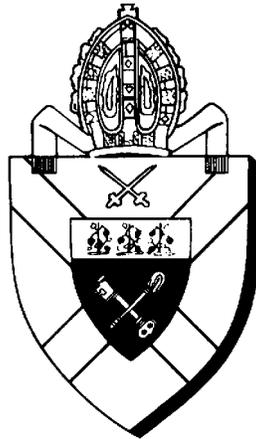


Guidelines for
Confirmation, Reception & Reaffirmation
in
The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut



Easter 2005

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These Guidelines were developed in response to conversation at a Clergy Day in the fall of 2002 in which issues and questions regarding Confirmation were raised. A Confirmation Working Group / Task Force subsequently was formed and met over the following two years, engaging in conversations about the formational issues of Confirmation and how the Diocese of Connecticut could present materials that would be helpful to the diverse congregations in our diocese. The main question we raised was, “What is Confirmation in today’s Episcopal Church?”

The committee studied historical perspectives of Confirmation as well as current practices in our diocese. Parishes were surveyed to learn how they specifically addressed Confirmation instruction. We explored the role of the bishop and deanery. We shared models that have mentors and mission aspects. Bishops Andrew Smith (Diocesan), James Curry and Wilfrido Ramos-Orench (Suffragans) engaged in a round table discussion with the Task Force. Themes quickly emerged: the importance of ‘mature decision’ and community, movement into mission and ministry, and intentional preparation instruction. Above all, we agreed that Confirmation should be a meaningful affirmation of one’s life in Jesus made in the public community – an adult response to one’s baptismal vows.

We are particularly grateful to Sharon Pearson for her leadership and support of this project. Sharon generously offered us her master’s thesis as the starting place for our work. She had already done the research on the history of Confirmation and on child development. While everyone on the committee wrote parts of the Guidelines and Addenda, Sharon was the one who did all the pasting together, formatting, and entering of editorial changes, and for that the committee extends our profound thanks.

I want to thank our bishops, especially Bishop Curry, who met with us regularly, and I am grateful to all the members of the committee for their commitment to the ministry of spiritual formation.

We are offering these Guidelines and accompanying resources as a gift to the parishes of the Diocese of Connecticut and the wider Church. It is time for our leadership, clergy and lay, to speak to the importance of life-long formation and the mature unfolding and launching that occurs in an intentional Confirmation process. While there is a place for didactics in Confirmation instruction, we believe formation and preparation should emphasize the importance of community and faith sharing. It is an opportunity for our communities to come together and experience the gifts of one another. The Spirit is fully present in the lives of our communities – it is a time to be sent out to fulfill our mission.

Confirmation Task Force

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The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

“In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature and public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.”

1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 412

“Confirmation is one’s promise to follow Jesus Christ for the rest of your life.”

The Right Reverend Andrew Smith

Guidelines for Confirmation, Reception & Reaffirmation

By Baptism we are made full members in the Body of Christ, and in it we are sealed and confirmed as Christ’s own forever. Confirmation is the Rite of Re-affirmation of one’s Baptismal vows made in the context of the faith community that includes the laying on of hands by a bishop. Candidates are presented and asked to reaffirm their renunciation of evil and a renewal of their commitment to Jesus Christ. This is a representation of the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life and his or her connection to the wider apostolic community. The act of reaffirmation is an acknowledgment that the individual is an ambassador for Christ, having found new meaning, empowerment, healing or transformation in faith. The congregation promises to support those who are recommitting themselves to their life in Christ. Preceding and following such a reaffirmation (whether it is Confirmation, Reception from another denomination into the Episcopal Church or one’s Re-affirmation years after one’s Confirmation), candidates should be engaged in ongoing, faith-forming education for discipleship, service and mission, understanding that Christians continue on a journey of faith within the context of a supportive faith community.

Episcopalians, like all Christians, believe that our life is founded on the life of Jesus Christ, and that as a church we are called to offer the redeeming love of Christ to all people. We publicly state our belief that God calls us to love all God’s children, as Jesus offered his life for all humankind. In the Diocese of Connecticut, Confirmation is a person’s commitment to renew these promises made at Baptism. It is an affirmation made publicly in the community of faith, signaling a personal movement into mission and ministry in one’s life. We are all pilgrims on a life-long journey to know Christ and become faith-full communities of the Gospel, no matter our age. Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation are important threads that add strength and individuality to the tapestry of our lives of faith in Christ.

The following guidelines are to assist faith communities in preparing candidates for Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation. While most of these are directed toward youth, the assumption is that adults (whether they are being Confirmed, Received or preparing for Re-Affirmation) will also participate in a comprehensive preparation program. A core curriculum for such preparation is our Baptismal Covenant. It is imperative to balance learning about the Episcopal Church and an Anglican expression of the Christian faith with putting one’s faith into practice. Addenda follow each guideline, with explanations and rationale, as well as resources to assist clergy and designated baptized adults who will oversee instruction and preparation.



“It is Jesus whom we proclaim, teaching everyone in all wisdom so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.” Colossians 1:28-29

Guidelines for Confirmation Preparation

1. Candidates for Confirmation should be in 10th grade, 16 years or older (See Addendum A)
2. Preparation should be a minimum of one academic year (September – May) with a preference for two years of preparation prior to the Rite of Confirmation (see Addendum B) with opportunities for on-going formation and education for all ages post-Confirmation
3. The Faith Community should take an active role in supporting Confirmands through prayer, recognition and serving as mentors to journey with each candidate (see Addendum C)
4. Clergy and Lay Persons share leadership in the preparation of candidates for Confirmation, Reception and Re-affirmation (see Addendum D)
5. The Rite of Confirmation is held regionally through our deaneries. The Deanery is a source of support and companionship in preparing Confirmands through retreats, mission opportunities and preparation. We are called to connect our lives and witness to each other within the greater Church, forging new connections across parish boundaries (see Addendum E)
6. The Bishop is an integral part in the preparation of Confirmands (see Addendum F)
7. Components for preparation (see Addendum G) should include:
 - ✦ Scripture
 - ✦ The Book of Common Prayer
 - ✦ Service & the Life of the Baptized
 - ✦ Mission & Community
 - ✦ Prayer
 - ✦ Faith & Practice – to include participation in worship, stewardship, Christian ethics, moral decision making and theological reflection
 - ✦ Episcopal polity
8. Additional Resources (see Addendum H)

Adult Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation

For adults, these rites are truly sacramental . . . an outward and visible sign of a spiritual renewal. There is an assumption that those who present themselves are experiencing significant spiritual growth and want to respond to the movement of the Spirit within them in a concrete and public way. In some cases, a person may wish to renew his/her Baptismal vows at the same time a spouse is being Confirmed or Received as a sign of support and of their shared faith life.

Some adults want to learn about the Church before they become involved in community life, while others get involved and then desire a way to formalize their relationship to the Church and God. Preparation for each of these individuals should include the areas mentioned in Guideline 7. And this should be an ongoing process; every congregation should have a means for all adults to continue in their journey of faith formation.

Sponsors should also be available to adults who are seeking to re-affirm their Baptismal Covenant. The role of these sponsors is to be a companion – one who accompanies the newly committed or renewed on their journey of growth and nurture of their faith. Regular attendance at worship, participation in the life and mission of the community and study should be expected of all candidates. A discussion of what ministries they feel called to as they grow in their faith is essential for how they live their life of faith in the church and in the world: at home, work, and community.

All adults need encouragement and support when entering into new conditions, environments and states-of-being. The community of Christian believers is a place for learning through shared journeys, supporting each other as we deal with experiences in our daily lives and endeavoring to integrate our faith into our actions. A parish that participates in active discernment for all the baptized in order to live out one's faith in the world on an ongoing basis will identify the practice of one's faith as fundamental to the Call. Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation invites participants to make a personal commitment to nurture and practice their faith in daily life.

Attentiveness to the spiritual lives of all adults in a congregation is essential. Often the church focuses on the needs of our programs already in place and tries to fit people into those slots. Each parish program, committee and organization would benefit from an "Action / Reflection" model that makes sure there is an integration of church activities with individuals' spiritual lives and the mission of the Church.

Reception

Persons presented for Reception are those who have been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity, have previously made an adult public affirmation of faith in any other Christian Communion (either at their Baptism or on a separate occasion) and now desire to live their faith within the fellowship of the Episcopal Church. Preparation for reception should include how one practices the faith in the Anglican Communion and how we as Episcopalians live out our Christian mission in community.

Reaffirmation

Reaffirmation is suitable in a variety of situations for persons who have already made a mature public declaration of faith within this Communion: those baptized persons who have made a mature public declaration of faith, and have later left the church or fallen away from active faith, and now wish to express their revived commitment to the covenant of their Baptism; those baptized persons who have already made a mature public declaration of faith, and are now experiencing a call from God toward a new growth in faith, commitment, or service, may respond to and affirm that call before the Bishop and the community of faith. Reaffirmation is a repeatable rite and should be used with sensitive pastoral discernment and after appropriate preparation.

ADDENDUM A:

Age & Attendance Recommendations

“Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:5-17

The Diocese of Connecticut believes that individuals who are presented for Confirmation should be 16 years or older (10th or 11th grade). Since Confirmation is making a “mature” commitment to one’s faith, we believe these age guidelines will support young people in making decisions that can have a life-long impact. The Task Force on Confirmation also recommends that candidates be active members of the congregation for at least one year prior to beginning preparation instruction, since affirmation of one’s Baptism is rooted in living in community.

Rationale

A group of scholars give us insights into the development of adolescents. Jean Piaget wrote about cognitive development while Erik Erikson was concerned with psycho-social development. The work of James Fowler, Gabriel Moran, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, John Westerhoff and James Loder help us understand where the adolescent is in his or her faith journey. Development in each of these areas impacts a young person’s ability to “make a mature decision” to receive the laying-on-of-hands at Confirmation in the Episcopal Church.

In the course of development, adolescents begin to question and doubt the beliefs they have acquired in childhood and early adolescence. When moving from concrete to abstract thought, young people learn not all questions have finite answers, and questions of faith cannot always be proved. Adolescents are looking for proof. Not until adulthood do young people pass beyond this stage of disbelief and decide to set their heart on something beyond themselves, recognizing that human beings are never able to reduce life and faith in God to a rational system.

Many of the developmental changes of adolescence revolve around several key tasks that all children must accomplish as they move toward adulthood. As the individual moves through adolescence, the developing of an identity, coming to terms with one’s sexuality, developing autonomy and a planning for the future are important issues. The church can play an important role in assisting our young people move through these tasks.

Adolescence can be broken up into three chronological parts: early (11-12 years), middle (13-15 years) and late (15-17 years). However, no two adolescents develop in the same way chronologically. Yet they ask the same questions: Am I competent? Am I normal? Am I lovable and loving? Physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual development occurs in each young person differently. Some will be more focused on physical changes, while others will be more interested in the spiritual aspect of their lives. Each area of development offers the community an opportunity to support youth in their journey.

The issues faced by middle school/junior high and early high school students (ages 11-15) involve a focus on self and peer group. They are mostly interested in the present, with limited thoughts of the future as far as their own plans and expectations. In late adolescence their intellectual interests expand and they usually have greater persistence and interest in physical, mental and emotional challenges. They are concerned with ‘being normal’ and with their relationships. It is also a time when friendship patterns shift. It is a time of experimentation and limit testing. Their consciences are showing more consistency toward recognizing positive and negative behavior, and they are developing the capacity for abstract thought. It is a time of “*acquiring a religion*,” a transitional time of holding the beliefs of the faith community as

experienced in worship and instruction. It is a time when a person assumes the beliefs and faith for him or herself.

This time of search involves questioning, judging critically, and experimenting through the use of reason and argumentation in addition to feelings and experiences. It is very much a “faith of the head” rather than a “faith of the heart.” Faith will often express itself in the form of doubt and the struggle to frame philosophical formulations. Through this personal search for truth, the adolescent moves from dependence on others’ understandings and ways to a state of autonomy. To find a faith of their own, adolescents need to doubt, question, and test what has been handed down to them. They need to criticize the tradition in which they were brought up and to question their own feelings and experiences. During this period, parents (and other adults) need to be especially sensitive to the fact that changes don’t necessarily mean that faith is being discarded; it may only be that the expressions of faith, which belonged to others – often parents – now need to become uniquely those of the adolescent. It is a time to embrace and support the young person in their search for meaningful faith. Not all teenagers are ready to make a commitment to a life-long faith decision at this point. Each person should come to Confirmation when he or she is ready to make that commitment.

For John Westerhoff, the adolescent is moving between an *affiliative faith* – the sense of belonging – to a *searching faith*. In late adolescence, due to a broadening worldview and education, a person begins to doubt and question those values and statements that were fundamental to understandings of faith in previous years. Erikson states that adolescence is a struggle between *identity vs. identity confusion*. Between 12 and 18 years, an individual becomes more interested in a personal relationship with God, but may be opposed to institutional religion and reject the religious belief of their parents. Deep religious questions are asked but may be kept to one’s self because of a fear of rejection or ridicule. An adolescent can make a commitment one day, then change their mind the next, especially if a more attractive opportunity or friend has a different view. According to Fowler, faith is a process of becoming. An adolescent’s new cognitive abilities make mutual perspective-taking possible and allows the individual to integrate their faith into their identity and the new realities of their lives.

By late High School (age 16 and older), there is an increased level of independence and a more cohesive sense of identity. Individuals are more likely able to examine their inner experiences and think ideas through with more emotional stability. They can show concern for others, delay self-gratification and compromise. Peer relationships remain important, but now take a place among their other interests. They are more concerned with the future and the importance of one’s role in life. Social and cultural traditions regain importance in their lives, and there is an increased interest in moral reasoning, personal dignity, self-esteem and setting goals. It is a time to encounter and nurture one’s spirituality as well as plan for the future, further education, career and adulthood.

Young adults are able to enter into critical reflection on their beliefs and values, gaining perspective on life and understanding of the self as part of a social system. The internalization of authority and the assumption of responsibility for making explicit choices of ideology and life-style open the way for critically self-aware commitments in relationships and vocation. This “individuated-reflective” faith is an appropriate time for a person to make a commitment and re-affirmation to a particular belief system, such as being confirmed.

The Task Force on Confirmation recommends that Confirmation be offered to older adolescents. In doing so the Church will be supporting young people in their wrestling with issues and coming to a mature decision as they move from the faith of their parents to assuming for themselves their own faith. When everybody in the eighth grade is expected to be in the Confirmation class, we run the risk of pushing young people who are not ready and it may be impossible for them to resist being confirmed along with their classmates, even if they are given a choice. This is often exhibited with the comment, “everybody in

my grade at church is doing it.” It doesn’t respect their autonomy, but follows the desires of parents or peers. Such an approach does not take into account the faith development and maturity of the individual. This model of confirmation ministry can resemble a rite of passage, a reward for attending classes or arriving at the end of the education process in the church. Confirmation should be a sign of one’s growing commitment to his/her faith and the responsibilities that comes with being part of the Christian community.

Parental expectations:

Many parents and congregations are not ready or prepared for this change. For some congregations moving to this model may mean putting a “moratorium” on Confirmation classes for several years. If there absolutely must be a rite of puberty due to social and parental pressures, local clergy might consider special recognitions in the context of congregational worship to mark an individual’s milestones. Such prayers might ask for guidance during the forthcoming period of questioning and growth, for strength in the development of adult faith and for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Suggested prayers can be found in the Appendix.

In communities where young people leave home to attend boarding or preparatory school, it has become customary in some parishes to confirm them before their departure, regardless of age or previous participation in the faith community. This practice is contrary to an individual making a personal, mature decision and should be discouraged. Instead, parents and students should contact the school chaplain and find ways for the student to participate in the faith community of the school they will be attending. If the school does not provide a spiritual component as part of its student life, a local Episcopal Church can be an avenue for building new relationships in a faith community. Most boarding schools help students to understand that they do not exist apart from society, that society's issues are their issues, and that they are called to respond to the needs of others. Students are encouraged not just to share what they have with others, but also to understand the issues and complexities of society and to consider what their individual and corporate responsibilities are and to take action. It is in such an environment when one lives away from home that questions of faith and strengthening of one’s belief system can nourish and grow. This is the community that witnesses and supports the young person who is not able to attend the church community of his or her parents. It is within the context of this community that it is most appropriate for one to make a public affirmation of their faith. And it is this community that can continue to support the young adult in their faith journey.

ADDENDUM B:

Preparation Time

“It is required of those to be confirmed that they . . . are sufficiently instructed in the Christian Faith . . .”
1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 860.

Due to the comprehensive and encompassing content in which the Diocese of Connecticut desires for preparation of its Candidates for Confirmation, the Task Force recommends that two years be dedicated to Confirmation instruction. At a minimum, instruction should take place over the course of one academic year (September – May). In recent years we have experienced more prepared candidates for Confirmation from those parishes that have been more intentional about taking the time, energy and integrity in providing instruction and formation programs for adolescents. With parishes using programs such as *Journey to Adulthood* and those engaged in mission trips and on-going service projects, we have seen that longer, as opposed to short term, preparation time prepares individuals much better.

Rationale:

“Christians are made, not born,” said Tertullian. Following Jesus is challenging work for the Church. Many factors in modern culture seem to conspire against the Church in its efforts to grow disciples. A commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord requires more personal investment than a perfunctory 6-8 weeks of instruction classes. The Rite of Confirmation is not “graduation” in which one has completed a course of study. William Willimon (“Making Christians in a Secular World,” *The Christian Century*, Oct. 22, 1986) speaks of Confirmation as nothing less than giving people the equipment they need to be disciples. Christianity is a way of life together . . . it is experiential, personal, engaging . . . becoming disciples of Jesus through our lifestyle, beliefs and values. Confirmation (and its preparation) continues and strengthens Christian growth that has already begun. It is learning a way of being that will remain with one forever.

In order to examine and experience a comprehensive preparation program, Confirmands need adequate time for building community, learning, reflecting on and applying their faith. This cannot be accomplished in 6-8 weeks. The components of preparation can take a variety of forms (see Addendum G) and can occur at various times: Sunday “education hour,” weekend-retreats, afternoon or evening activities, mission trips and special events.

ADDENDUM C:

Role of the Faith Community

We have all been charged with the call to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13

“When two or three are gathered together in my name.” Jesus has called us as Christians not to be isolated but to be in community, calling us out into the world in mission. We are members dependent on one another to be the Body of Christ, upheld by the basic principles of the Baptismal Covenant. As expressed in *The Book of Common Prayer*, this Covenant maintains that individuals and institutions are called by God to adopt certain fundamental disciplines and dispositions in order to embrace fully their basic identities. As embodiments of the Christian faith, our Episcopal Churches are created to be communities that honor, celebrate and worship God as the center of life. They are created to be models of God’s love and grace. They are created to serve God in Christ in all persons. They are created to “strive for justice and peace among all people and [to] respect the dignity of every human being.” These principles are the basis on which Christian identity and vocation exist. It is important for young people to participate in the life of the community so that they can also experience the love existing in such a community. Christian formation encompasses many aspects of our life in the community of faith and takes form in a variety of ways. Candidates should be involved in parish life and mission as their skills and gifts lend themselves to growth and new understandings.

Youth ministry is the responsibility of the entire congregation. Youth ministry, including Confirmation ministry, ought to be rooted in relationships. Balanced leadership of adults from a variety of ages, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds are most effective in helping youth identify with the wider church. Candidates should also have a sponsor or mentor from the parish to accompany them throughout their preparation period. Sponsors/mentors (selected and organized under “safe church guidelines”) take on a special relationship with the candidate that is different than other mentor relationships found in the secular world. They are companions on the journey, and they understand that Christians walk with Christ together, not independently.

Rationale:

Thirty years ago young people could not receive communion until they were confirmed. This is no longer the case. Parishes are devising a wide range of practices for formation of young children and families as they experience Holy Eucharist. Our ministry to pre-adolescents, adolescents and post-adolescents is broadening to reflect the church’s understanding of Baptism and the church’s appreciation of human development so that we can minister to and with them in developmentally appropriate ways. The focus of Confirmation preparation is no longer about receiving communion, but about making a mature commitment to faith and affirming the promises made at Baptism.

Our diocese is comprised of cities and suburbs, towns and rural areas. All our struggles are similar, no matter where we live. All communities, regardless of size or wealth, face the enormous challenge of fragmentation. Family life is seriously threatened by the schedules we keep. Often our young people lack the sense of community beyond family that is critical to understanding the church and its mission. Experiencing community life as lively, energizing and interdependent is critical to understanding our Baptismal Covenant. Faith and religion are caught, not taught. Our parish communities can offer a context for learning about loving relationships, honesty, justice, forgiveness and all the other values essential to our faith. We can help families deepen their sense of Baptismal life.

Involving the congregation in the confirmation process encourages the development of one-to-one relationships between youth and adults. Sponsors assist those exploring their faith to share in the journey by offering insights, questions and the shared wisdom of what it means to be part of a faith community. Mentors should be baptized members of the parish community. They should have a serious commitment to sharing their faith, meeting regularly and supporting the candidate in his/her spiritual life. They should be faithful in attendance, stewardship and participation in the life of the community. Besides giving encouragement, mentors are living examples of what it means to be an Episcopalian, putting faith into practice.

The congregation as “cheerleaders”: Our young people desire to be known by name, listened to and involved. Depending on their interest and gifts, young people can participate in parish committees and ministries, such as service & mission projects, worship (acolyte, lay Eucharistic minister, lector, choir, altar guild, usher, etc.) and fellowship opportunities. They should not be just tapped for “grunt work” but asked of their opinions and ideas in planning. Following Confirmation, they should be invited to participate as Vestry members, Search committee members and other important leadership roles.

And most importantly, the faith community can pray for candidates for Confirmation in the Prayers of the People throughout their time of preparation. The community can support the Confirmands by offering both the time and money for mission trips and pilgrimages and any other events.

A congregation making a "pilgrimage" together for the Service of Confirmation will signify a deep and necessary response to Jesus, who calls us to leave the familiar and move out into new life. It is important for Confirmands to know there are members of their parish community present for the Deanery celebration of which they are re-affirming their faith in this context of the Church gathered.

On the Sunday following the Deanery Celebration of Confirmation, each parish should in the context of the main liturgy of the day recognize individually those who have re-affirmed their Baptism. (See “Liturgy of Celebration for those who have been Confirmed, Received or Re-Affirmed” in Appendix.)

ADDENDUM D:

Role of the Laity and Clergy



“You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.” Timothy 2:1-2

Understanding that a faith community consists of many individuals with different gifts, the Task Force hopes that a variety of adults will participate in the leadership of any preparation program. Candidates benefit from a variety of relationships with adults when on a journey of faith: pastor, priest, teacher, friend, sponsor and co-seeker.

Lay leadership:

This is an important time for encouraging the gifts of laypersons to participate as teachers and leaders. It is the role of clergy to identify appropriate individuals following “safe church guidelines.” Those who have participated in education programs such as EFM (Education for Ministry), MEEP (Ministry, Education and Exploration Program), DOCC (Disciples of Christ in Community), Journey to Adulthood leadership training, or others can be good resources. However, it is important that they receive support for this task, especially in the areas of scripture and Anglican traditions. The diocese holds regional teacher training sessions periodically and special training for Confirmation preparation leaders will be offered beginning in the fall of 2005.

Besides the traditional instruction, experiential and hands-on learning are important elements of spiritual formation. An important role of any leader is to provide a safe, supportive environment in which deep dialogue can occur. Knowing “all the answers” is not as important as being open and engaging the questions, and being seekers in relationship with one another.

Clergy leadership:

The priest-in-charge of a parish has oversight responsibility in the preparation and presentation of candidates for Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation. The clergy have an important leadership role in teaching, selecting team members and modeling relationships. It is a time for a priest to develop rapport with young people and the adults moving toward reaffirming their Baptismal promises.

If a member of the congregation attends (or plans to attend) boarding school, the Task Force encourages the priest-in-charge to help the family establish a relationship with the school chaplain. This may simply involve notifying the administration of the young person’s participation in the home faith community and of their imminent arrival. The parish may keep in contact through correspondence and praying for them in the weekly Prayers of the People. The clergy can provide a bridge between home and school, insuring a supportive environment for an often-difficult transitional time in a young person’s life.

ADDENDUM E:

Role of the Deanery

“So that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” Ephesians 3:10

In the year 2000 the Diocese of Connecticut shifted services of Confirmation from being parish-centered to being deanery-centered. In the context of the Deanery, with many parishes celebrating and joining together, our ties to one another as companions in Christ in the Episcopal Church have been identified and strengthened. Making a “pilgrimage” together for the Service of Confirmation reminds us that Jesus calls us to leave the familiar and move into new life. Given the increased diversity of the diocese, a shared choir, readings in several languages, and a variety of worship leadership reflects the cultural richness of our diocesan life together. Congregations combined in worship can offer a glorious witness and experience that energizes us for common life and ministry.

Rationale:

When the Deanery is an active combination of Clergy and Lay Persons, its participation in Confirmation makes the rite truly as commonly defined, the work of the people: the work of God and the people’s response to God’s work. The Bishop’s Laying on of Hands is the central sign of that work in Confirmation. The parishes in the deanery are the faith community representing the Church of which we are all members.

The Task Force on Confirmation recommends deanery events and/or retreats be offered for all persons seeking adult Baptism, Confirmation, Reception or Re-affirmation. The diocese will support the planning and preparation of such events through the Christian Education and Youth Ministry staff. The central actions of the day should engage our senses to recall, awaken, and reclaim our baptismal experiences as full initiation into our life in Christ. Led by the bishop, it is a time to share stories, baptismal memorabilia, sing, hear scripture, pray, and discover a wider community. This is also the opportunity to have some time with the Bishop in conversation, encouraging questions and sharing hospitality. The Prayers of the People for the Confirmation service can be written by the Candidates with the Bishop in preparation for the Deanery Confirmation Service.

Deanery Confirmations connect our lives and witness to each other within the greater Church. It is an opportunity for deepening our sacramental life together and forging new connections across parish boundaries. The Music and Liturgy Commission of the diocese is a resource for liturgy planning. The Appendix offers a description of how the Greater Bridgeport Deanery has successfully demonstrated how diverse congregations can come together through each of its Confirmation celebrations.

ADDENDUM F:

Role of the Bishop

“The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese” 1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 855

The Bishop Diocesan is the chief pastor and teacher in the diocese, a role he or she shares with the Bishops Suffragan. The presence of a bishop at Confirmation underscores the importance of this rite in the life of the Church.

The bishop is the Celebrant and Preacher at Confirmation services. Confirmation is an opportunity for individuals to experience the ministry of the bishops. The laying on of hands at Confirmation is an outward sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit and forms a personal and physical link between the Confirmand and the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church throughout the world and through time.

The bishop is available to meet with candidates through deanery events, diocesan youth events and parish visitations. Conversation, questions and the mutual sharing of stories are opportunities for individuals to become personally connected with the Bishop as a representative of the wider Church as well as a faithful servant of Christ. Deaneries and parishes are strongly urged to contact the bishop’s office to arrange a convenient time for this to occur well in advance of the event you are planning.

ADDENDUM G:

Components for Preparation

- ✦ *Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?*
 - ✦ *Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?*
 - ✦ *Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?*
 - ✦ *Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*
 - ✦ *Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?*
- The Baptismal Covenant, 1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 304-5

Both students and leaders are members of the Body of Christ, exploring the content of the Christian revelation and learning from each other. While the transmission of content (as listed below) is important, the joint exploration of the Gospel and what it means in our life is vital. It is the Church's job to help support and sustain a life of faith put into practice, yet fun and friendship are part of the abundant life of Christ. Even the hard work of preparing people to live that life is work done in joy.

Scripture:

The goal of studying scripture in a Confirmation program is to insure candidates have an understanding of our Salvation History so that he/she can articulate "who they are" and "whose they are." The ability to reflect on The Story in relationship to Our Story and My Story is an important component in making a mature affirmation of one's Baptismal Covenant. Understanding the key themes, characters and stories of the Old and New Testaments helps us understand how God is in relationship with Creation and how we are called to build upon that relationship with God, through Jesus Christ and each other. The Great Vigil of Easter is an expression of our faith journey as a people of God; the retelling of the Passover Story every year makes it Our Story.

Being intentional in studying the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in a faith community allows us to answer the questions, "Who do you say that I am?" or "Who is Jesus in your life?" This is a vital question that one who comes before the bishop for Confirmation, Reception or Re-Affirmation should be able to answer.

The Book of Common Prayer:

In order to be articulate who we are as Episcopalians, candidates should be familiar and have experienced *The Book of Common Prayer* (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Eucharist, Baptism, etc.) Our Creeds are statements of our beliefs, and thus should be explored and discussed. *An Outline of the Faith* (The Catechism) in the prayer book and our Baptismal Covenant should be key elements of a preparation program.

Service & The Life of the Baptized:

Putting faith into practice and connecting the Gospel to our daily life is how we live out our Baptismal Covenant in the world. To do this, besides being committed to the Gospel, we need to recognize the spiritual gifts that have been given to us. Exploring those gifts and talents and how they can be used in the day-to-day life of a Christian in the world should be part of Confirmation preparation. An individual can share these through ministry in a congregation AND in the community. Most high schools have service components and requirements for graduation. Confirmation preparation can support that service, faithfully reflecting on what has been observed, experienced and learned. Service is not to be seen as "doing for someone" but as "being in relationship" with another for a common purpose, respecting the dignity of all of God's creation.

The life of the Baptized is centered on being Christ's disciple in the world. Discipleship lies in our personal experience, understanding and relationship to God, in Jesus and with the Holy Spirit. Discipleship lies in our small intimate relationships with family and friends, also in the larger arena of our interaction with the world: in school and places of work, with peers, colleagues and co-workers, and in our towns and cities.

Mission & Community:

The Church's mission is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. We do this as we pray, worship, proclaim the Gospel and promote justice, peace and love. Mission is an essential component of our life as we connect the teachings of the Church with who we are as individuals. Being able to answer such questions as, "How are you Christ in the World?" "What is your rule of life?" and "What have you done on a daily basis as a disciple of Christ?" is part of re-affirming one's Baptismal promises. How we offer opportunities for prayer and work is paramount during a time of formation and preparation.

Mission trips and/or experiences help the individual know Jesus Christ in a new way. Why do young people have to go outside the parish (even their own town, state or country) in order for this to occur? As one youth stated, "I needed to be stretched and taken out of my comfort zone." We need to be people who fully rely on God on a day-to-day basis . . . being with those whose only hope is God helps us take the risk of trusting the way they must trust. The moment our dependence shifts from the self to God, the Gospel becomes real. Our culture is one in which the theology of glory prevails, and thus the theology of the cross is difficult to access. How does the candidate connect with Christ crucified?

Youth mission trips put us in touch with the distinction between faith as "trust in God" and faith as "assent to doctrinal positions." Curricula and learning what it means to be an Episcopalian can often be separated from experiencing the power of the living God. Short-term mission trips stimulate discernment and encourage the recognition of one's gifts with ministry in the world. Our faith is connected to real life issues and a realization of what people gathered together in God's name can do.

Life-long formation involves equipping ourselves for mission. This occurs through sermons, being in community and experiencing God incarnationally in others. It is an opportunity for mutual spiritual enrichment. Through mission we can make two-way connections in our life-faith journey, respecting the shared wisdom and faithfulness of all God's people.

Prayer:

Prayer includes both individual and common prayer, and both are staples of a lively spirituality. There should be opportunities to learn and experience different kinds of prayer. Prayer is the common thread that should be woven into all aspects of Confirmation preparation.

The Task Force recommends that a spiritual retreat occur at the beginning and near the end of preparation. This can take the form of a Deanery event, visit to a monastery or retreat center, through mission work or a pilgrimage. It can be a time to leave other concerns behind and be open to God. The reason for including a retreat is to let the group experience yet another way of living in Christ and finding out where one can go for this kind of experience – building resources for the rest of their lives.

Keeping a journal is another means for spiritual growth and nourishment. Each of us learns and experiences the Holy in different ways. Tapping into the variety of prayer experiences through multiple intelligences (See Addendum H) will allow each person to learn more about themselves and develop life long practices.

Faith & Practice

A balance of “doing” and “being” is at the heart of baptismal living. The five promises at the end of the covenant are about how we live our faith in everyday life. By living according to those standards we become Christ’s people in the world. Being able to reflect theologically on the events of our lives and find God in them assist in putting faith our into practice. Participation in the sacramental life of the faith community, attentiveness to scripture and prayer, and having a sense of the presence of Jesus keeps us mission-focused. Diversity and anti-racism training, as well as stewardship education should be included. Being in community, we as Episcopalians have a connection with others that goes beyond our individual parishes. Each congregation needs to develop a program that both includes the elements listed above and meets the needs of its own community.

To assist in the integration of faith into daily practice, the Task Force suggests each candidate answer the following questions (adapted from the Diocese of Western Massachusetts’ guidelines) toward the end of the preparation process. (See the Appendix for additional suggestions)

1. What have you learned from your preparation that has been most important to you?
2. Who is Jesus in your life? How would you respond to His question, “Who do you say that I am?”
3. Why do you want to want to confirm your baptismal vows?
4. How do you plan to live as a mature and faithful Christian in the Church and in the world after you are Confirmed?

Episcopal Polity:

Being an Episcopalian involves understanding that we find authority for our lives in Scripture, Tradition and Reason. The ministries of the laity and clergy (bishops, priests, deacons) should be explored, as well as parish, diocesan and national governance. Representatives duly elected by the people hold decision-making authority in the Episcopal Church. Being conscious of what it means to be an Episcopalian in today’s world, to include the diocese, the entire Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion is a foundational issue to be discussed throughout a program of preparation.

Additional Resources

Teaching Resources

The Diocesan Resource Center pages (Christian Education and Adult Formation) of the Diocese of Connecticut's website (<http://www.ctdiocese.org/resources/christianed.shtml>) has extensive listings of other resources and website links for youth and adults. Copies of many of them are available to preview or borrow from the Resource Center. Contact Sharon Ely Pearson 860-233-4481 x126 or spearson@ctdiocese.org.

It is important to understand that each of us has **different learning style preferences**. To more effectively connect with each candidate, intentionally choose a variety of styles to include in preparing sessions.

- ✦ *Interpersonal* – person-to-person relationships; communication – discussion, small group work, service projects
- ✦ *Intrapersonal* – inside the person; reflection – journal writing, guided imagery, silence.
- ✦ *Verbal/Linguistic* – written and spoken language – reading, writing, reporting, listening
- ✦ *Logical/Mathematical* – inductive and deductive reasoning – recognition of patterns. Analyzing, identifying, planning, sequencing
- ✦ *Visual/Spatial* – real and mental images; relationships of objects – drawing, visualizing, imagining, see a picture or item, symbols, making a banner.
- ✦ *Body/Kinesthetic* – tapping into the body's inherent ways of knowing – movement, touch, manipulating objects, dance
- ✦ *Musical/Rhythmic* – sensitivity to patterns and sounds, rhythms and beat – listening to music, singing, writing lyrics, creating music in its various styles

Materials & Published Curricula:

A Disciple's Prayer Book is a little booklet from Native Episcopalians that is an excellent tool for engaging in conversation regarding scripture in the context of brief worship.

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/6057_4133_ENG_HTM.htm

The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey (Episcopal Diocese of Texas 800-318-4452 or www.epicenter.org) is a comprehensive video series that includes a brief history of the Episcopal Church, an instructed Eucharist, spiritual gifts assessment, information about the Bible, Jesus, the Creeds and Baptism. (The Diocese of Connecticut owns several copies of this series on DVD and VHS, all available to lend to parishes.)

The Seekers (LeaderResources) is a two-year discussion program structured around Faith, Life, Self and Values. Especially helpful are plans for retreats.

A People Called Episcopalians: A Brief Introduction to Our Peculiar Way of Life by The Rev. Dr. John H. Westerhoff (Morehouse) is a 40-page booklet that attempts to address the foundational issues of what it means to be an Episcopalian, devoting chapters to things Anglican: Identity, Authority, Spirituality, Temperament and Polity.

Living Water: Baptism as a Way of Life by Klara Tammany (Church Publishing) explores through music, prayer, poetry and story following the Baptismal Covenant. Ideas for group discussion and study included.

Sealed and Sent Forth: A Curriculum for Older Youth and Adults (LeaderResources) is a Confirmation program developed by the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina for Confirmation, Reception, Re-Affirmation, New Members. Sessions include worship, content, discussion, reflection and community building that are designed to be used over a 15 week period of two-hour sessions.

A Catechism Curriculum by David Klutterman (LeaderResources) is a resource based on The Catechism in The Book of Common Prayer 1979. It is designed for use in a congregation from kindergarten through adult, divided into 18 sections, following the format in the Prayer Book.

Specifically for Youth:

Claim the Name Confirmation Teaching Plans (Cokesbury) – although Methodist in its approach, there are a number of activities and scripture studies, following the Church Year, which can be easily adapted.

Making Disciples: A New Approach to Confirmation by William H. Willimon (Logos Productions) – also Methodist, has excellent discussion questions that mentors can tap into for meeting with their confirmand.

What do Others Believe? (Morehouse) – a nine-week module from the Episcopal Curriculum for Older Youth that explores other religions (Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) to gain a better understanding of their own beliefs. Visits to other denominations and faith traditions are excellent ways to gain a perspective on the uniqueness of Episcopal liturgy and belief.

Difficult Decisions (Morehouse) – a nine-week module from the Episcopal Curriculum for Older Youth the focuses on ethical decision making.

Sacraments of the Church (Morehouse) – a nine-week module from the Episcopal Curriculum for Younger Youth explores Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Healing, Confirmation, Marriage and Ordination.

The Episcopal Church Year (Morehouse) – a nine-week module from the Episcopal Curriculum for Younger Youth examines the church seasons and sights and sounds of church.

Spiritual Life (Morehouse) – a nine-week module from the Episcopal Curriculum for Younger Youth looks at the threads that form our personal experiences – from ways of praying to the ethics of the church.

Keeping the Promise by Andrew Parker (Morehouse) – while its didactic approach is not recommended, there is a chapter that discusses “ministry” in terms of “the church scattered and the church gathered” that may be helpful in tying service projects to our Baptismal Covenant. There is also a “Vigil on the Eve of Confirmation.”

LinC – Living in Christ: Youth Connecting Faith and Life (<http://www.ileadyouth.com/resources.asp>) (Cokesbury) is a subscription-based curriculum, available by fax or e-mail. Content comes from current events and media (movies, music, television) which is then paired with appropriate scripture. Bible readings for the week are included, as are devotions. Past issues are also available, especially in regard to world events such as 9/11, War in Iraq, elections, etc.

Blessing New Voices: Prayers of Young People and Worship Resources for Youth Ministry (United Church Press) by Maren C. Tirabassi is filled with seasonal ideas and prayers

The Journey to Adulthood (LeaderResources) is a comprehensive 6-year Christian formation program for Grades 6-12 that includes in depth exploration of Self, Spirituality, Sexuality and Society. It includes Sunday morning lesson plans, rites of passage liturgies, movie nights, mission project ideas, and ministry discernment.

I Will, with God's Help (Living the Good News) is a six week Confirmation program based on the Baptismal Covenant that can be adapted for retreats. Journaling and mentor material are helpful.

The Book of Uncommon Prayer: Contemplative Celebratory Prayers and Worship Services for Youth Ministry by Steven L. Case (Youth Specialties) is a collection of daily prayers, seasonal worship services, prayers, responsive readings and private devotions for those who work with youth.

The Great Adventure: Exploring Christian Faith with Young People by Patricia Bays (Anglican Book Centre) a collection of stories, art projects, games and meditations for ages 10-15 that can be adapted for use with older youth.

Specifically for Adults:

The Bible Workbench (The Educational Center) is a lectionary Bible study resource that involves a weekly exploration of Biblical texts, with commentary, readings from literature and evocative questions for use by groups and individuals. <http://www.educationalcenter.org/pages/courses.html>

Emmaus: The Way of Faith (Morehouse) is a multi-phase study program that fosters Christian formation and discipleship in the congregation. Emmaus courses are modeled after the story of Jesus walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. They are divided into three stages: Contact, Nurture, and Growth, to serve Christians who are at different points in their faith journey. Developed by five Anglican clergy in England.

Practically Christian (LeaderResources) links the five baptismal vows of the Episcopal Church with six classical prayer forms of Adoration, penitence, Intercession, Petition, Thanksgiving and Praise. Originally designed as an EFM follow-up model, it can be used for Newcomers or Renewal of Baptismal Vows.

Outward Signs: The Congregation as Sacramental Community (Leader Resources) a means to help a congregation consider its worship, stewardship, outreach, education, evangelization, and fellowship as outwards signs of Christ's love.

The Seventh Day: Embracing Sabbath Spirituality (Leader Resources) 6 sessions to prayerfully practice the rhythm of rest and delight in daily life.

Venture: Exploring the Great Ideas and Images of the Christian Faith. (OACES: Leader Resources) A study and discussion program in four series of 6 sessions per subject of: Theology, Church History, Liturgics, and Holy Scripture. Series A: Christian Beginnings; Series B: Reformations; Series C; Prophetic Voices of Freedom; Series D: One God, Many Faiths.

The New Church's Teaching Series (Cowley):

- *The Anglican Vision* by James E. Griffiss - An introduction to the Anglican tradition, including the origins of Anglicanism, the Catholic and Evangelical renewal movements of the nineteenth century, and a survey of Anglican mission, theology and worship.

- *Opening the Bible* by Roger Ferlo - A guide to navigating the practical difficulties of reading the Bible. Explains why the pages look the way they do, how to compare translations, and how to use notes and cross-references. Above all, the author teaches the importance of respectfully approaching the Bible as scripture.
- *Engaging the Word* by Michael Johnston - The Bible always invites us to read below its surface, because the mystery of God is found not simply on the page or within the text, but behind it. Through the insights of this book, we delve deeply into the life and story of scripture.
- *The Practice of Prayer* by Margaret Guenther - Tackles timeless and troubling questions about the spiritual life, and discusses classic Christian approaches to prayer and shaping a rule of life through practices such as making a confession, going on retreat, using a journal to pray, finding a spiritual director, and praying when God does not seem to listen.
- *Living with History* by Fredrica Harris Thompsett - A conversation on the mission of the church, engaging different historical figures.
- *Early Christian Traditions* by Rebecca Lyman - Traces the growth of the Christian church's theology, worship, leadership, and ethics through its first six centuries, ending with Augustine of Hippo.
- *Opening the Prayer Book* by Jeffrey Lee - A practical introduction to the Book of Common Prayer; its history, structure, and the questions most asked about it.
- *Mysteries of Faith* by Mark McIntosh - Spiritual theology, the doctrines underlying Christian belief.
- *The Christian Social Witness* by Harold Lewis - Christian social teachings and the changing relationship of church and society.
- *A Theology of Worship* by Louis Weil - Invites the laity to claim their true baptismal role and serve alongside the ordained as ministers and celebrants of the liturgy and why it is necessary to reclaim it today in the midst of Anglicanism's increasing multiculturalism.
- *Ethics After Easter* by Stephen Holgrom - Identifies clear axioms for Anglican moral theology and the ethos required for moral decision-making on the part of individuals and church bodies. He explains why ethical reflection is not the same as church governance, and why the institution cannot "make" its moral theology.
- *Horizons of Mission* by Titus Presler - Explores the scriptural basis of mission, historical and contemporary Anglican approaches to mission, the encounter with other religions, and the interaction of gospel and culture. His ten principles for mission in the twenty-first century will help parishes and dioceses to engage in world mission as companions in mutuality.

Seabury Classics (Church Publishing):

- *A Season for the Spirit Readings for the Days of Lent* by Martin L. Smith - provides forty daily meditations for Lent, leading us on a journey of discovery in which we find that Christ, through the Spirit, embraces every aspect of our humanity.
- *Living the Faith Community The Church That Makes A Difference* by John H. Westerhoff - Christians have a basic need for communities without which they cannot receive, sustain, or deepen their faith. Successive chapters describe with clarity and insight the narrative characters of church life, the role of worship, the importance of liturgy to Christian nurture, and the role of catechesis in forming Spirit-filled community.
- *One to Watch, One to Pray Introducing the Gospels* by Minka Shura Sprague This book sketches the shape of the Gospels, the four stories of Jesus. It reveals their similarities and differences and how they relate to one another.
- *Temptation* by Diogenes Allen - Temptation offers us a doorway into the mystery of God. Using a model of the three temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness: the temptations of material goods, security, and prestige - to face the reality of these temptations, even though we cannot overcome them, is to enter upon the spiritual life.
- *The Anglican Spirit* by Michael Ramsey - These introductory lectures on Anglicanism reveal the breadth of the former Archbishop of Canterbury theological understanding, his ecumenism, and his

vision of the church and the Christian life. Informal and conversational in style, the lectures offer an overview of Anglican theology, spirituality, and history.

- *The Joy of Worship* by Marianne H. Micks - discusses the work of the Holy Spirit in worship, Jesus' own practice of worship, the importance of worshiping with others, and the practice of discipleship through personal prayer, friendship, and a rule of life.
- *The Language of Grace* by Peter S. Hawkins The traditional representation of grace is explained using the parables of Jesus and contemporary literature,
- *We are Theologians Strengthening the People of God* by Fredrica Harris Thompsett - Introduces key facets of Anglicanism and aspects of contemporary theology. It is an excellent parish educational resource, especially for adult forums and group study.

<p style="text-align: center;">Prayers & Worship Resources <i>For gatherings, mission trips, liturgies</i></p>

Planning for the Future

by Avery Brooke from "Plain Prayers for a Complicated World"

Help us, Lord, to look at the past and present so that we may better plan for the future, and to face our strengths and weaknesses with honesty and wisdom. Help us to be open to your guidance as we discuss and plan for the future, and grant us both generous imagination and practical plans.

An Evening Prayer

by Avery Brooke

Father, I have much to be grateful for tonight, and I thank you, I have much to regret and I ask your forgiveness. But even as I ask your forgiveness I know that I receive it, and a deep peace fills my heart. Help me to sleep well tonight and to wake ready for that daily, yet greatest gifts, a fresh start.

"On Foot" Blessing

Celtic Daily Prayer

Bless to me, O Lord,
the earth beneath my feet;
bless to me, O Lord,
the path I tread:
my walk this day with the Father,
my walk this day with Christ,
my walk this day with the Spirit.

For Times of Change

by The Rev. Linda C. Smith-Criddle from "Women's Uncommon Prayers"

Assist us, Lord, in living hopefully into the future. In the face of change, help us to set unnecessary fears aside and to recognize our potential for creative response. Help us to develop a reasonable optimism when confronted by "the new" and to guard against our own defensiveness. Be with us as we remember and celebrate former times, and keep us from unreasonable yearning for them, which takes us from the work you have set before us in our time. All this we ask in the name of your Child, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Listening

by Ms. Helen Barron from "Women's Uncommon Prayers"

To hear – really hear – amid the noise
To risk being open to another perspective amid the impacted certainties
To be able to listen to impassioned pleas while owning the cries that come from our own hearts.
To hear an argument that does not resonate, disagree, if that be our call, without demeaning the bearer of the words.
Amid the colliding words injured by the words injuring with our words:
Help us to hear your Words. Amen.

A Blessing on Someone's Journey

Celtic Daily Prayer

I bless you, (Name),
in the name of the Father, the Son and the Sacred Spirit.
May you drink deeply
from God's cup of joy.
May the night bring you quiet.
and when you come
to the Father's palace
may his door be open
and the welcome warm.

Prayer for Mission

From the "Book of Uncommon Prayer"

God, your children are hungry. They're lonely. They're cold. Don't let us walk by them on the other side of the road, God. We get so caught up in our own lives and our own so-called "problems" that we forget there are people who sleep in the streets. Open our eyes. Light a fire under us so that we can do all Jesus told us we should do. Help us give a hand up and not a hand out. Help us show the world we are your children. Help us show the world that the church is more than building with brick and stained glass. Church is a warm blanket, a hot meal, a listening ear. When we offer ourselves to those in need, Lord, we offer ourselves to you. Amen.

Prayers from the Heart

adapted from "Sacred Heart University Prayer Book"

God of wisdom, bless these Confirmants
Whose hearts you have fashioned
For beauty and grace.
Bless those who love them
And those who have guided them
To this holy time and place.
Call them to discovery,
To seek their truest self,
To fall in love with wisdom
And claim her as their wealth.
Send them forth in knowledge,
Your teachings be their guide.
Watch over them,
Protect them,
Walk softly by their side. Amen.

Christ Has No Body

From Teresa of Avila, 17th Century

Christ has no body on earth but yours;
yours are the only hands with which he can do his work,
yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world,
yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Prayer of a Confirmation Teacher / Mentor

from "Daybook for New Voices"

God – Con-firm my foundation.
As I begin this confirmation program as a teacher (mentor) –
Help me to share my excitement about the Bible,
my depth of spirituality and
real examples of how it sustains me,
(in fact, God, help me to be a little more spiritual
while these young people are watching me),
my knowledge about Church history,
my pride in our denomination,
my openness to our neighbors in world religions,
and my grappling with my own ethical decisions
and the decisions that young people make.

As they are learning, guide me to learn something new.
As they grow, stretch my roots and bud-tips;
When they wrestle with questions,
evaporate the easy answers on my lips,
and, whether I have taught these concepts
ten, twenty, forty years, or this year is for the first time . . .
bring me with enthusiasm and humility to
God's holy power-point presentation . . .
The con-firmation of our faith. Amen.

Confirmation Blessing

adapted from "Sacred Heart University Prayer Book"

May God give you strength
And a virtuous heart,
So that in time of trial
You will find yourself armed with treasures you can use.
 May God give you faith,
 So that in all that you do,
 You know firmly and with conviction
 Who made you, and why,
 And for what purpose.
 May God give you peace, a lasting peace
 That dwells in your heart
 And enables you to comprehend
 The breadth and length,
 The height and depth of Christ's love for you. Amen.

My Prayer for You

Celtic Daily Prayer

May the Father of Life pour out His grace on you;
may you feel His hand in everything you do
and be strengthened by the things he brings you through:
this is my prayer for you.

May the Son of God be Lord in all your ways;
may he Shepherd you the length in all your days,
and in your heart may He receive the praise:
this is my prayer for you.

And despite how simple it may sound,
I pray that His grace will abound
and motivate everything you do;
and may the fullness of His love be shared through you.

May His Spirit comfort you, and make you strong,
may He discipline you gently when you're wrong,
and in your heart may He give you a song:
this is my prayer for you.

May Jesus be Lord in all your ways,
may He Shepherd you the length of all your days,
and in your heart may He receive the praise:
this is my prayer for you, my prayer for you.

Praying the Baptismal Covenant¹

Do you believe in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in God the Holy Spirit?

Our God,
It's one thing to say the creed
but another to put my trust in you.
Help me to live with the assurance
that you are my Father
and that nothing can separate
me from your love,
trusting in your forgiveness
expressed in Jesus
and looking to your spirit
to make me your person.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the Prayers?

Our God,
I know I was not meant to go it alone
because you created the church
to be supportive family for your children.
And I know the church
is made up of people like me
- so it isn't perfect!
Help me to play my part in the church,
so I can learn from the teaching,
be encouraged by the fellowship,
be renewed in the Eucharist,
and find strength for living
each day through prayer.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Our God,
you understand that sometimes I do things
I never intended to do.
My sorrow doesn't put it all right.
Neither can I use my weakness as an excuse.
Help me
to begin anew,
to experience your forgiveness
and to walk again
in Jesus' way.

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Our God,
help me to live
the way Jesus called me to live.
May my actions speak louder
than my words
of your love and of new life in Jesus.
At the same time, help me rise above
my own stumbling speech
and give the words to express what I believe.
Let me be a witness to the Truth.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Our God,
all too often I have looked at people
in a very superficial way.
Help me begin to see them with your eyes,
knowing that every person is created
in your image,
as your child.
If Jesus died for that person,
how can I despise him?
Give me a new love that reaches out to everyone
because Jesus died for all.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

Our God,
I don't want my attitudes to be shaped
by the injustices that mar society,
by the discrimination, greed and lust
that spoil relationships.
In Jesus
color does not count
wealth carries no weight,
and gender is not important.
Help me to live in Jesus,
to see people through his eyes,
and work for the harmony
that reflects your kingdom. Amen.

¹ *Praying the Baptismal Covenant* by Reginald Hollis
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acknowledgement to Anglican Fellowship of Prayer)

Guidelines for Mentors / Sponsors

Consider a variety of adults across the life span in the congregation. When inviting adults to serve as mentors or sponsors, be clear about the expectations involved. Plan a get-together with all the mentors and Confirmands for some orientation. One way is to get together for a simple lunch after worship. Plan at least two or three gatherings during the year for mentors and youth together. Sometimes it helps adult mentors gather with one another. Participating in a group event or service project with the class is also advantageous for building relationships.

Characteristics desired:

- An adult of mature faith – someone who can give evidence of fulfilling his or her baptismal promises
- An Episcopalian - This is not to say that members of other denominations are not Christian. It is to recognize that some of the sharing and witnessing that the sponsors are asked to do come out of a particular tradition and theological understanding. There is a reason that we are Episcopalians, and this tries to support that reason.
- An active member of the congregation – faithful in attendance, stewardship and ministry; one who can serve as a personal representative of the parish and is a sign of the community's commitment to the candidate. This will give the young person another adult outside of his/her family with whom he/she can identify in the parish. The young person's parish life will, therefore, be strengthened if the adult is a regular and visible participant in the life of the parish.
- One who has a heart for engaging in conversation regarding faith issues

Responsibilities:

- To meet with the Confirmand regularly. The meetings do not have to be long, but should be in a public area or with others nearby (following safe church guidelines). Meet over coffee at a local diner, bookstore or fast food restaurant. Go to a movie. Please allow enough time for interaction.
- Attend gatherings/luncheons with all the Confirmands and sponsors, probably at the beginning of the Confirmation class and as the date of Confirmation draws near.
- Attend worship services involving the Confirmand: enrollment, Deanery Confirmation service, post-parish celebration
- Hopefully, after Confirmation the newly confirmed and sponsor will maintain a relationship in years to come.

Ideas for Building Community with a Group

Exercises:

- Building activities, initiative games and problem solving activities
<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>
- Team Building Games <http://www.gamesforgroups.com/photo.htm>
- Team Bonding: Where Work Meets Play <http://www.teambonding.com/programs.html>

Locations:

- Ropes Course at Camp Washington, Lakeside, CT 860-567-9623
<http://www.campwashington.org>
- Go Vertical! (Indoor rock climbing) Stamford 203-358-8767 <http://www.govertical.com/stamford>
- Stone Age Rock Gym, Manchester 860-645-0015 <http://www.stoneagerockgym.com/>
- Mountain Fun (indoor rock climbing) and Prime Climb (Indoor Ropes course), Wallingford 203-265-4006 <http://www.primeclimb.com/ropes.html>

Field Trip Ideas

*These are resources and are not necessary endorsed by the Diocese of Connecticut.
Call first for availability.*

Visit a Labyrinth:

- St. Paul's on the Green, Norwalk – Medieval – outdoor: brick 203-847-2806
<http://stpaulsnorwalk.org>
- Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford – indoor: canvas, portable 860-527-7231
- Mill Brook Farm Bed & Breakfast, Coventry – outdoor: rock & garden 860-742-9362
- Wisdom House, Litchfield – 7-circuit Classic – outdoor: bricks on grass 860-567-3163
<http://www.wisdomhouse.org>
- Mercy Center, Madison – outdoor: brick & stone 203-245-0401
<http://www.mercyctrmadison.com/>
- First Presbyterian Church, New Canaan – Medieval – indoor: canvas 203-966-5459
<http://www.ctlabyrinth.org/>
- Old St. Andrew's, Bloomfield – indoor, canvas 860-242-4660 <http://oldsaintandrews.org>
- Round Hill Community Church, Greenwich – outdoor: woodland, rock & garden 203-869-1091
<http://www.roundhillcommunitychurch.org>
- Bodies in Balance, Norwich – outdoor: rock & garden 860-889-4690
- Immanuel Lutheran Church, Meridan – Modified medieval – indoor: painted floor tile
- Trinity, Newtown – Medieval Chartres replica – indoor: canvas 203-426-9070
<http://trinitynewtownct.org>
- First Church of Christ, Woodbridge – 7-circuit classical – outdoor: rock & brick on grass 203-389-2119

Go on Retreat:

Retreat Centers in Connecticut

- Mercy Center, Madison, CT – 203-245-0401 <http://www.mercyctrmadison.com/> (Catholic: Sisters of Mercy)
- Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center, West Hartford, CT 860-521-0440 (Catholic: Passionist)
<http://www.holyfamilyretreat.org/>
- Convent of St. Birgitta, Darien, CT 203-655-1068 <http://birgittines-us.com/> (Catholic: Sisters of St. Birgitta)
- Incarnation Center, Ivoryton, CT 860-767-0848
http://www.incarnationcenter.com/conference_center.php (Episcopal)
- Oratory of the Little Way, Gaylordsville, CT 860-354-8924 <http://www.oratoryhealing.org/> (Episcopal)
- Emmaus Spiritual Life Center, Uncasville, CT 860-848-3427
- Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT 860-567-3163 (Catholic: Daughters of Wisdom)
<http://www.wisdomhouse.org/>
- Transfiguration Lodge (All Saints Center / Camp Washington), Lakeside, CT 860-567-9623
<http://www.ctdiocese.org/ministries/allsaintscc.shtml> (Episcopal: Diocese of Connecticut)
- Our Lady of Calvary Retreat Center, Farmington, CT 860-677-8519
<http://www.ourladyofcalvary.com> (Catholic)
- St. Edmund's Retreat, (Enders Island) Mystic, CT 860-536-0565
<http://www.endersisland.com/about/index.cfm> (Catholic: Society of St. Edmund)
- Trinita Retreat Center, New Hartford, CT 860-379-4329 http://www.msbt.org/mis_trinita.htm (Roman Catholic: Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity)

- Camp Wightman, Norwich 860-376-2179 <http://www.campwightman.org/> (American Baptist Church – Connecticut)
- Klesis Ministries – Center for Renewal, West Simsbury 860-651-1594 <http://www.klesis.org/contact.html>
- Trinity Conference Center, West Cornwall (860) 672-1000 <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/center/index.html> (Episcopal: Diocese of New York)

In neighboring states:

- Adelynrood Conference and Retreat Center, Newburyport, MA 978-462-6721 <http://www.adelynrood.org> (Episcopal: The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross)
- Sisters of St. Margaret’s Convent, Boston, MA and St. Margaret’s, Duxbury, MA 617-445-8961 <http://www.smbos.com/> (Episcopal: Sisters of St. Margaret)
- Society of St. John the Evangelist Monastery, Boston, MA 617-876-3037 and Emery House, West Newbury, MA 978-462-7940 <http://www.ssje.org/retreats.html> (Episcopal: Cowley Brothers)
- Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, NY 845-384-6660 <http://www.holycrossmonastery.com/> (Episcopal: Benedictine)
- St. Aidan’s Retreat House, Brewster, NY 845-278-4854 <http://www.chssisters.org/> (Episcopal: The Community of the Holy Spirit)
- Convent of St. Helena, Vails Gate, NY 845-569-7051 http://www.osh.org/convents/convent_menu.htm (Episcopal: Order of St. Helena)

Day or Overnight Trips:

- Washington National Cathedral <http://www.cathedral.org/cathedral/>
- Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City <http://www.stjohndivine.org/>
- The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park, New York City <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/medny/cloister1.html>
- Diocesan House, Hartford <http://www.ctdiocese.org> (archives)
- Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford <http://www.cccathedral.org/>
- Overlook Farm (Heifer Project working farm), Rutland, MA 508-886-2221 <http://coy.ne.client2.attbi.com/RR-HeiferProject.html>
- Glebe House, Woodbury <http://theglebehouse.org>
- Trinity Church, Wall Street and St. Paul’s Chapel, New York City <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/>

How to Plan a Mission Trip

Begin at least 6 months in advance

- Meet together: pray, read scripture, sing
- Learn about the culture of the destination
- Participants engage in the planning
- Not didactic learning – getting “equipped” for mission
- Adults act as mid-wives, drawing out the individual gifts of the group
- Focus on community
- Project is to “share faith”
- Fundraising
 - Parishioners can donate frequent-flier miles
 - Talent Shows, dinners, etc. in which the candidates actively participate

During and Post Trip:

- Reflection is paramount
- Centered in prayer

Resources:

- Emily Perow – Diocesan Youth Ministries Coordinator eperow@ctdiocese.org 860-233-4481x128
- Adventures in Mission (AIM) - <http://www.adventures.org/a/> an interdenominational short-term missions organization. Their objective is “to mobilize and equip the Church for missions by bringing the mission field to the Church's doorstep. The dramatic changes in our world have ushered in a new era in missions. A new breed of missionary is helping to win the world for Christ: The Short-term Missionary. It is this new generation of missionaries that AIM seeks to assist.”
- Mission Trip Prep Kit Leader's Guide: Complete Preparation for Your Students' Cross-Cultural Experience by Kevin Johnson (Zondervan)
- Group Workcamps Foundation <http://www.groupworkcamps.com/2005/default.asp> “We serve churches by providing mission-trip experiences, helping children, youth and adults grow in their relationship with Jesus.”

Resources for Service and Mission

In 1990, Search Institute released *Effective Christian Education*, a national study of 560 congregations in six denominations. In the area of 'service it was discovered that the more time youth give in service to the community through the congregation, the greater the loyalty and bonding to the church. Similar patterns emerged when young people indicated the likelihood that they would be active in church as adults. Finally, young people who were most active in service throughout their congregations were almost twice as likely to say, "it is very important to me to belong to a church," when compared to those who had been involved in no service. Service is an important vehicle for nurturing loyalty. Bonds among those who serve side-by-side also keep young people active because of their shared experience and the relationships that form through the service.

All the following aspects of a Christian education program for youth which nurtures growth in faith (as measured in the *Effective Christian Education* study) are integral to a service-learning model:

- Emphasizes intergenerational contact
- Uses life experience as occasion for spiritual insight
- *Creates a sense of community in which people help one another develop faith and values*
- Encourages independent thinking and questioning
- Involves youth in service projects

- Emphasizes values and moral decision making
- Emphasizes responsibility for poverty and hunger
- Teaches the Bible and core theological concepts (which service-learning does through preparation and debriefing)
- Teaches youth how to be friends and make friends
- Helps youth develop concern for other people.

Using understandings of adolescent development, these types of service projects are appropriate:

For grades 6-8 (Middle school):

- Planting trees in a park
- Setting up a recycling program
- Helping a family move
- Collecting food for a foodshelf
- Helping in a a homeless shelter
- Tutoring younger children
- Visiting nursing homes
- Being peer ministers

For grades 9-12 (high school)

- Designing and conducting a campaign to educate others about the environment
- Writing letters to Congress or city officials
- Organizing a product boycott
- Educating adults about racism
- Teaming with adults to build or renovate a home
- Tutoring younger children
- Assisting/running an after-school programs

Service and Mission Resources:

Pilgrimage: Seeking Signs of Christian Witness in Church and Community (Office of Children's Ministries, ECUSA). To make your pilgrimage truly useful, this booklet provides thoughts and questions for reflection while groups are preparing, on site, leaving the site, and for later reflection; originally organized for a Children's Advocacy Conference, and tied in with the *Children's Charter*, the questions have strength and meaning for any one going on pilgrimage or a mission trip.

Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn by Peter L. Benson and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain (Search Institute) offers specific ideas for youth service projects.

The Kid's Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis (Free Spirit Publishing) How to solve the social problems you choose - and turn creative thinking into positive actions - transform your creative thinking into actions that make a difference in your neighborhood, town or city, state, country - even the world. Written for kids (and adults) on topics: life beyond the classroom, power skills - writing letters, using the internet, petitions; working with the government; resources of Webster, telephone # and address; tools - samples of petitions, surveys, resolutions ready for photocopy and how to write a grant.

Facing the issues: Creative strategies for probing critical social concerns by Robert E. Myers (Zephyr Press) conflict resolution activities and social concerns awareness exercises

Alternatives for Simple Living's mission has been to equip people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and celebrate responsibly since 1973 as a protest against the commercialization of Christmas. Its

annual Christmas Campaign ("Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?") is a popular resource published annually. <http://www.simpleliving.org/>

UNICEF (www.unicef.org) is the United Nations Children's Fund, represented in over 158 countries. Their focus is on immunization, girls' education, HIV/AIDS, child protection, war and poverty of children under the age of 18 years. There are many areas of work of this organization:

- *Voices of Youth* is a global website for young people to explore, discuss and take action on issues that effect them. <http://www.unicef.org/voy/voy.html>
- *Young Leaders* gives examples of stories of how young people are taking action for making the world a better place. http://www.unicef.org/people/people_leaders.html

An Asset Builder's Guide to Service-Learning Planning a service project? Going on a work or mission trip? This resource ties together service learning and the asset framework in congregational, school, and youth program settings. □ This guide is intended for those who seek to develop strategies for doing service learning that maximize its asset-building potential. Search Institute, 1999. 184 pages. □

Growing Up Generous: Engaging Youth in Giving and Serving by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, Elanah Dalyah Naftali, and Laura Musegades. Based on a two-year research project, this book creates a mosaic of what is happening and what could happen in American Jewish and Christian congregations to cultivate in young people a deep and lasting commitment to giving and serving. It highlights critical culture shifts needed in congregations and highlights the importance of both culture and practices in cultivating generosity among young people. Alban Institute, 2000. 197 pages.

Mission: Hunger

- *Bread for the World* is a nationwide Christian citizens movement seeking justice for the world's hungry people by lobbying our nation's decision makers. <http://www.bread.org>
- *CARE* is an international humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. <http://www.care.org/>
- *Children's Fund for Christian Mission* and its international associated organizations are dedicated to serving the needs of children worldwide--primarily through person-to-person programs, in the context of the family and community, and using a developmental approach through national and local partners. <http://www.papaink.org/gallery/home/artist/display/161.html>
- *CROP Walk* is a community based fund raising event that raises money for local hunger-fighting agencies as well as the international relief and development efforts of Church World Service. <http://www.churchworldservice.org/CROP/>
- *Food for the Poor* ministers to spiritually renew impoverished people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean by raising funds and providing direct relief assistance to the poor, usually by purchasing specifically requested materials and distributing them through the churches and charity organizations already operating in areas of need. <http://www.fordforthepoor.org/>
- *ECHO* - Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization is a non-profit, Christian organization actively involved in networking global hunger solutions that specifically focuses on small rural farmers and urban gardeners in developing countries. <http://www.echonet.org/about.htm>
- *Heifer Project International* combats hunger, alleviates poverty, and restores the environment by providing appropriate livestock, training, and related services to small-scale farmers worldwide. <http://heifer.org>
- *The Society of St. Andrew* (<http://www.endhunger.org/index.htm>) is an ecumenical Christian ministry that feeds the hungry all year long by saving fresh produce □ that would otherwise go to waste and giving it to the needy. It includes several projects:
 - *The Potato Project* has redirected 45,000-pound loads of fresh, nutritious produce to soup kitchens, Native American reservations, food pantries, low-income housing areas, local churches, and other hunger agencies for distribution to the poor. □

- *The Gleaning Network* coordinates volunteers, growers, and distribution agencies to salvage food for the needy.
- *Harvest of Hope* is an ecumenical study, worship, and action mission trip program

Mission: Housing

- *Habitat for Humanity International* (HFHI) is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing and homelessness worldwide. Habitat is founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, decent, affordable place to live in dignity and safety. <http://www.habitat.org/>
- *Trevor's Campaign* (blankets for the homeless) It was a cold December night in 1983 on which 11-year-old Trevor Ferrell saw a TV newscast about people living on the streets. Those images stirred compassion deep within Trevor and he pleaded with his parents to take him to downtown Philadelphia so he could give his blanket and pillow to the first homeless person he met. In ensuing weeks, with the help of family, classmates and neighbors, Trevor made nightly trips into Philadelphia to distribute food, clothing and blankets to the needy. Through the generosity of hundreds of citizens and businesses, this little "campaign" soon grew into places to stay and an entire array of programs. <http://www.trevorscampaign.org>
- *Tools of Hope and Blanket* is a program of Church World Service that supplies blankets, tents and emergency supplies to people in crisis. Curriculum and resources are available. <http://www.churchworldservice.org/tools-blankets/index.html>

Mission: The Environment

- *Children's Rain Forest* (Monteverde Conservation League) is a private, nonprofit association of Costa Rican and International members. It manages and preserves for current and future generations the Children's Eternal Rain Forest (Bosque Nuboso Eterno de Los Ninos) , which contains over 50,000 acres; the largest private reserve in Central America. The MCL carries out various projects related to research, education, protection, habitat rehabilitation and volunteering. Its mission is to conserve, preserve and rehabilitate tropical ecosystems and their biodiversity. <http://www.monteverdeinfo.com/>
- *National Arbor Day Foundation* helps people plant and care for trees and encourage the celebration of Arbor Day to advance global environmental stewardship for the benefit of this and future generations. <http://www.arborday.org>
- *Pennies for the Planet* is a project of the World Wildlife Federation (WWF). Since 1994, it has been alerting people around the world to problems faced in various eco-regions around the world, while inspiring people to take action. This annual campaign has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for conservation projects around the world... one penny at a time. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/windows/pennies/>
- *Save our Streams* (SOS) is a national watershed education and outreach program of the Izaak Walton League of America <http://www.iwla.org/SOS/>

Mission: World Peace and Conflict Resolution

- *Friends of the Americas* was established in 1984, it has reached out with a hand of friendship to more than 500,000 people suffering from wars, natural disasters and poverty in Latin America. <http://www.friendsoftheamericas.org/index.html>
- *Kids Meeting Kids* promotes peace, fair treatment of young people and a better world <http://www.kidsmeetingkids.org/>
- *People for Peace* simply provides resources and links for building peace. www.people4peace.net
- *Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico* – International peace leadership programs for ages 13-18. Designed to counter racism and violence among youth <http://www.rtfcam.org/>

Appendix

A Possible Confirmation Preparation Schedule

The Book of Occasional Services offers an “Enrollment in the Catechumenate” which can be adapted as a means of beginning a preparation program in the context of the Sunday liturgy. An additional beginning can involve a gathering (over a meal, preferably), with candidates, their parents and sponsors. Every gathering should begin grounded in prayer.

Winter: Epiphany, Lent, Easter: Candidates are identified and brief instruction is given while community building is occurring

- Participation in diocesan youth events
- Social gatherings
- Field trips
- Service projects
- Participation in worship, especially The Great Vigil of Easter
- Biblical study and story sharing

Summer: Pentecost: Personal exploration of faith (with reflection)

- Read recommended books (fiction and non-fiction)
- Meet with the sponsor at mutually convenient times (following safe church guidelines)
- Summer picnic with candidates & sponsors

Fall & Winter: Late Epiphany, Advent, Christmas & Epiphany: Seasonal instruction and practice of the faith, through the lectionary and parish life

- Old Testament
- Life of Christ
- Stewardship
- Deanery retreat

Winter & Spring: Lenten Season: A period of more intense practice and discipline

- Retreat with spiritual direction
- Study of Baptism
- Participation in The Great Vigil of Easter
- Spiritual gifts assessment
- Life of Ministry

Spring: Easter & Pentecost: Final preparations for Rite of Confirmation

- Deanery Retreat
- Meet with the bishop

*Sharon Ely Pearson
Children's Ministries & Christian Education Coordinator
Diocese of Connecticut*

Characteristics of a Christian Leader

St. Bonaventure wrote a very practical work on spiritual leadership in the 13th. century. He was the organizer who assisted St. Francis and gave order and structure to the Franciscan order. In this work he describes six qualities of a spiritual leader:

Zeal for righteousness. Moral sensitivity to anything unjust in himself (first) or others. Highlights the importance of purity.

Compassion. This should be demonstrated to those who are facing both physical and spiritual weaknesses. Today Bonaventure would describe this aspect as being a servant to those in need.

Patience. Bonaventure reminds leaders of the critical need for patience due to at least three reasons; leadership is exhausting and demanding work, there is little apparent return for all the efforts a leader makes, and many who are on the receiving end are ungrateful.

Good example. Leaders are models that other people look to and follow their example, therefore, make it good! The leader is no better than the followers and Bonaventure stresses humility and maturity.

Good judgment or discernment. This guides the leader in knowing both what to do and how to do it. In relationship to this he addresses how to encourage the spiritual and moral growth of the community. He also reminds his readers of the need for delegation and the danger of becoming buried under the heavy load of administration.

Devotion to God. While listed last, this is the most important quality because everything else depends upon it. A close personal relationship with God guides us in all our leadership responsibilities. Here Bonaventure mentions the need for public and private prayer and cultivating an awareness or mindfulness of God in all of life.

Summarized by Tom Schwanda from St. Bonaventure. *The Character of a Christian Leader* (originally titled *The Six Wings of the Seraph*), trans. Philip O'Mara. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1978.
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A Sample Letter to Sponsors or Mentors

Thank you for accepting the invitation to become a sponsor/mentor for a young person at *(church name)* who is considering being Confirmed in the coming year/s. He/she is now entering a new phase on their faith journey. As part of their Confirmation preparation, we are inviting them to get involved in some "Christian thinking" as they think about their lives, their values, their hopes, and their relationships with the meaningful people in their lives, while they examine the foundations of our faith.

The importance of a sponsor cannot be put too strongly. Confirmation is the mature decision of an individual to renew their baptismal vows and commit themselves as Christians to The Church. With Confirmation comes an adult role in the life of The Church. The sponsor is utilized as an adult within the Church who can guide the candidate by sharing his or her own Christian history and the feelings and learning's that have come out of that growth in the community. In this way, the Confirmand will find the process of preparing for confirmation to be a way into the life of the parish and not a graduation from Church School. New adult relationships will be opened as sponsor and young adult explore the questions of faith that will arise during the coming months.

As a sponsor you will not be responsible for "teaching." As they are thinking of their lives, you will be asked to share some of your thoughts and questions. The most important thing that you and your child do is spend some time together in order to know each other more. How you spend this time is up to you. The meetings do not have to be long, but should be in a public area or with others nearby (following safe church guidelines). Meet over coffee at a local diner, bookstore or fast food restaurant. Go to a movie. Please allow enough time for interaction. As this young person grows in the "knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," he or she will learn much about your relationship to God and faith in Jesus while reflecting on their life of faith.

There will be an Enrollment of the Candidates for Confirmation on *(date & time)* in which you will formally sponsor your young person. Confirmation will be held on *(date & time)* at *(parish, town)* with The Right Reverend *(name)*. Our parish will celebrate this occasion the following day at *(time)* on *(date)*.

An *Outline of the Faith*, or *The Catechism*, is found on pp. 844-862 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. You may find this helpful in focusing on some topics for conversation.

An Outline of the Faith - The Catechism

To Be Human:

- How do you go about making decisions?
- How many times do you have to consider how your decisions may affect the lives of others?
- How difficult is it for you to take responsibility for decisions that may not have brought about the harmony that you hoped for?
- Any stories from your own history would probably be greatly appreciated by your child.

Baptism:

- What are some of the benefits you feel you derive from being a member of the community of the Church of God?
- What has it meant to you to be a member of the "family of God?"
- How do you think this community of the faithful differs from any other group of people?
- Talk about promises; what they are; how one makes one; what are the responsibilities?

The Holy Scriptures:

- How do you do your own Bible reading? (Be honest!)
- Share your experiences of how the Bible has or has not been of help to you.

The Ten Commandments:

- What are your feelings about law in general?
- How do you feel about laws that help you?
- How do you feel about laws that impinge on your actions?
- How do you feel when you're in a hurry? Are you tempted to break the law? Have you ever gotten a ticket for speeding?

Prayer:

- Your sharing on this topic will be especially important. Experience has shown that children do not do well when discussing prayer with parents. You may need to take the lead.
- How often do you pray?
- Do you have any favorite prayers?
- Are there times when you find it very hard to pray?
- Talk about what you would like your prayer life to be.

Credo and Belief:

- How important is it to you to know what you believe?
- How often do you think consciously about what you believe?
- What kind of goals do you have for firming up your faith?
- How does your belief in God strengthen you to go about other business in life?
- How do you practice your faith in daily life? (work, school, community, friends, family)

Sacraments:

- Share what it means to you to receive Holy Communion.
- What has it meant to you to be a regular worshipper at the Eucharist?

- In what ways, if any, have you availed yourself of the other sacramental rites of the Church?
- Has the Church had a sacramental ministry to you at time of illness or any other crisis in your life?
- What are the signs of God's love in each of your lives?

Church and Ministry:

- What does it mean to you to be a member of a worshipping, ministering body of people who are concerned with doing the will of God?
- How does the Church, in your experience, seek to determine the will of God?
- Why and how much to you love your church?
- Do you pray regularly for the ministry of the Church?
- Do you pledge regularly for the spread of the Kingdom?
- How do you arrive at the amount you pledge? Do you tithe?
- What are some of your ministries, outside of and within the Church?

Christian Hope:

- What are your feelings about love and death?
- What does the resurrection mean to you?
- What are some of your experiences with dealing with loss?
- What are your hopes for the future?

Youth in Mission: Experiencing the Power of the Living God

I. “*I needed to be stretched and taken out of my comfort zone*”

In our discussions I was grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences with youth in mission. These young people are usually 15 years of age or older. By far, the formative power of such experiences convinces me that most of our young people desperately need to have an experience of mission to truly taste and see the joy of believing in the power of God to save, which Confirmation implies. For all the good will and dedication, which we put into the many “discipleship” programs in the recent past, I believe we are spinning our wheels for nothing, in most cases.

I can recall a forum at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA, in 2000 when the young people, Latinos, African Americans, and others mostly Caucasians – mostly from middle class homes, however – shared their experience with adults who listened eagerly. The young people testified that the mission trip had helped them to know Jesus Christ in a way that they had never before. One adult asked, “Why is it that young people have to go outside their parish – even their own town, state or country – to encounter Jesus Christ?” One youth replied, and the others nodded assent, “Because I needed to be stretched and taken out of my comfort zone.” In my view, we need to be with people who fully rely on God on a day to day basis . . . with those whose only hope is God. In that moment, the Gospel becomes real. Our culture is one in which the theology of glory prevails; a culture in which the theology of the cross is difficult to access. That God is for us means precious little in the face of human pain and suffering of which young people are not always aware experientially. Do we preach Christ crucified?

From a theological vantage point, I believe that youth mission trips put us in touch with the distinction between *faith as fiducia* (trust in God) and *faith as assensus* (assent to doctrinal propositions). Theologians are beginning to think that nothing has done more to alienate modern folk from religion – and the decline of Orthodox Protestantism (mainline Protestant churches). Even our own conversation

surrounding Confirmation often focuses on curricula and learning what it means to be an Episcopalian – not about experiencing the power of the living God.

II. *Shared deprivation for different reasons*

In conversations we stumbled upon interesting common ground, since our group is comprised of people who serve communities that are residential (towns and suburbs) and urban. We were amazed to discover how similar our struggles are. Communities that are fortunate and less fortunate both face the enormous challenge of dealing with fragmentation. In both cases, family life is seriously threatened by the schedules we keep. I believe that experiencing family life as lively, energizing, and intimate is critical to understanding the Baptismal Covenant. The theological adage rings true: *quicquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur* – in other words, faith is where you find it; each experiences God according to one's context. Our young people sorely lack the sense of community, which is critical to understanding the church and its mission. In the family, one's conduct and moral values are shaped by the norms of the community. Again, religion is caught, not taught.

Interestingly, we learned that the two income family of the more fortunate (not necessarily "wealthy") is fragmented because not enough time is spent together, often because of commitments related to maintaining a lifestyle which justifies one's existence; low, also two income families – predominantly in our urban congregations – share a similar struggle: to survive they need two incomes and several jobs! In fact the two groups have a lot in common. Can something be done to learn from each other? Partner parishes make a lot of sense if undertaken not only for purposes of "helping poorer churches to survive" but also to deepen our sense of Baptismal life. I believe that the opportunity for mutual spiritual enrichment awaits.

The Reverend Irvin "Sherm" Gagnon

Vicar, All Saints Episcopal Church, Meridan ~ February 26, 2004

When is the Group Ready for a Mission Trip?

So when are teens going to be ready for a mission trip? Only the individual youth leader can answer that question. But our students are more likely to be ready when these ministry steps have been established:

1. The youth group has a good sense of what compassion is all about. In this country many of us don't like to think of ourselves as rich. But if you've done much traveling to other parts of the world, you know that even our poorest people have much more than those in the truly impoverished parts of the world. The sad thing is American young people often don't realize how blessed they are. They've been indoctrinated into a lifestyle of consumerism, as have many adults. It's so much a part of us that often we don't even see it.

Our youth group represents our "Jerusalem" in the Great Commission. It starts locally. If we want our teens to develop a lifestyle for missions, we must awaken in them the desire to exhibit compassion and charity at home. We need to teach compassion and charity in our youth group meetings.

One way of teaching this principle is to use simulations. Host a "poverty" meal with varying levels of food and service. Some will be fed steak and others will go hungry. Or you could plan a "homeless for the night" experience. Another option is to participate in events such as the "30 Hour Famine" which draws attention to the plight of the hungry.

2. An active local service ministry has been established. Our youth groups need to be able to minister at home before we send them to minister abroad. Some believe that taking our teens on a mission trip will wake them up to the needs around them, but I think this isn't usually the case. Without an active local service ministry already in place, it's too easy for our kids to come back home and fall back into their old

patterns. They had a nice trip with lots of memories but no real long-term changes. Ministering locally is our "Judea." There's no shortage of needs when we look around our communities. It's every bit as important to meet the needs in our community as it is to meet the needs in Mexico, the Caribbean, or Africa.

There are many local service organizations with which to partner. There are many books that offer lots of great service ideas for your youth groups. Take the time to establish a rhythm of local service, and you'll further enhance the service aspect of future mission trips. And our teens will be more in tune to ministering locally when they get back home.

3. The youth group has gone on cross-cultural ministry experiences within a short drive from home.

Before immersing youth in a completely different country and culture, let them minister to those in their own country who come from significantly different cultural backgrounds. Our teens need to grasp the huge differences in culture and lifestyle within this country. Cross-cultural ministry experience in this country is our "Samaria." Samaria, though adjacent to Judea, was a foreign culture to the Jews. And like many misunderstood cultures and people within North America, Jews considered Samaria, and everything within it, offensive. When traveling, the Jews did all they could to avoid stepping foot in Samaria. But Christ commanded his disciples to go there and share the Gospel before they went on to the rest of the world.

Most church denominations have ministry projects set up that serve in cross-cultural settings. There are also parachurch organizations doing the same thing. Most of these ministries are ready and willing to partner with youth groups. Do a little research and make a few phone calls and you can be established in this sort of ongoing outreach ministry.

Ready for the Big Time

Of course, the individual youth worker will know best whether his or her teens are ready for a short-term mission trip. We may find our kids ready for a big trip even before we've accomplished Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria ministry experiences. Or we may be doing all of these and find our teens still aren't ready. It's an individual call.

Once we make the decision, we must allow ample time to prepare everyone for the trip. It's important to meet often, ideally starting about six months ahead of time, focusing everyone on the experience ahead and spending time in the word and prayer. A great idea is to do a team-building activity such as a ropes course.

And remember, just because a person can raise the money to pay for the trip doesn't necessarily mean that he or she should go on the trip. This is ministry. The purpose is to serve and to share Christ. It's a tough decision to make, but those who aren't spiritually ready should be excluded from the trip. Consider setting stringent criteria for potential participants. Use written testimonies and interviews by the leaders to help guide your decisions. Mission trips are reflections on our congregations, so it's important to send our best.

Excerpt from "The End of the Youth Mission Trip as We Know It" by Jeff Edmondson
Youthworker Journal – May/June 2001

A Time of Reflection: A Model from Trinity Episcopal Church, Newtown, CT

For nine months, Confirmands meet monthly with a mentor in addition to two-hour classes with the Rector and Youth & Family Minister.

Included in the requirements is the writing of reflection papers on the following subjects:

- ✦ Reflection on The Eucharist: Describe each of the parts of the Eucharist and what they mean to you personally
- ✦ Reflection on the spiritual life of your parents: Interview your parents and reflect on their lifelong habits of prayer and spiritual growth
- ✦ Reflection on your own spiritual journey: Where have you come from so far?
- ✦ Reflection on your community service (Note: there is a requirement of ten hours of community service)
- ✦ Reflection on the Vestry Meeting: What have you learned about the ministry of the parish from the Vestry meeting you attended? (Note: Confirmands are required to attend a Vestry meeting. Trinity has two youth representatives on Vestry; this is a popularly requested ministry.)
- ✦ Reflection on the Commission meeting: What have you learned about the ministry of the Commission from the meeting you attended? (Note: Confirmands can choose among any of the commission meetings to attend.)
- ✦ Final essay: Look at the promises that were made for you in Holy Baptism and which you take on in Confirmation: based on these, tell why you believe you are ready to affirm your faith as an adult in ministry in the church through the Rite of Confirmation OR based on these promises, share why you are not ready.

Finally, each meets individually with us to discuss their choices for the ministries they will take on as an adult in the community of faith and in the world.

*The Reverend Kathleen Adams-Shepherd
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Newtown*

One Deanery's Model: The Greater Bridgeport Deanery

When the Deanery is an active combination of Clergy and Lay Persons, its participation in Confirmation makes the rite liturgy as commonly defined, the work of the people. Truly, it is God's work in and among us that we celebrate. The Bishop's Laying-on-of-Hands is the central sign of that work in Confirmation.

The Greater Bridgeport Deanery, composed of 16 parishes in Bridgeport and the immediately surround area, is particularly well organized and active in mission. Credit goes to our part-time Missioner, a layperson who has brought us into conversation with one another, built trust, involved the laity, and focused us on mission.

We are blessed with great diversity in our deanery. To demonstrate our common purposed in the midst of diversity and to accommodate the numbers being Confirmed, we hold 2 services at 2 locations simultaneously, using one bulletin. Typically, one location is an urban parish, and the other suburban. Great care goes into the bulletin, so that artwork reflects the spirit of youth; the bulletin is a keepsake. The four-page bulletin lists by name and parish each candidate for the Laying-on-of-Hands. The format is available on disk by request to the Bishop's office.

The planning is the responsibility of the Liturgy Chair of the Deanery Executive Board and Missioner. Parishes volunteer to host the event. The Liturgy Chair meets with each Rector and any designated staff to choose the Propers and the hymns; at least one is in Spanish. The Gospel is proclaimed in both English and Spanish. The Gospel is printed in both languages, along with responses used throughout the service. We use the hymnal and prayer books in the pew, printing only the Spanish hymn.

Together, they host parish Rectors and Deanery Liturgy Chair outlines the logistics of how candidates arrive at the Bishop's chair and how they exit. Typically, the Bishop's Chaplain or a Deacon assists the Bishop at the Bishop's chair, holding the crozier. An acolyte may hold the Prayer Book for the bishop. A Deacon assists the Confirmands in kneeling and standing. Parish by parish, the Confirmands exit the pews to the side, when possible, and gather up front on the side with their priest. The priest moves to the Bishop's right. The Confirmands, holding a white 3" x 5" card with their full name and the particular rite approach the bishop one at a time, hand the card to the priest, and kneel before the Bishop. The priest reads the name, and the rite to the Bishop, who proceeds with the Laying-on-of-Hands. Every effort is made to afford the congregation a full view of the candidate to permit the congregation's total participation in prayer. The candidate exits to the other side and goes to the back of the church and down the center aisle to resume his or her seat.

First, one side of the church is Confirmed, and then the alternate side. The Liturgy Chair often acts as usher to keep the flow of Confirmands moving.

Confirmands arrive and are seated in the pews an hour before the service begins. A rehearsal of the Laying-on-of-Hands procedure takes place either before or after the Bishop speaks with the Confirmands prior to the service.

The Liturgy Chair and the host rectors determine how many stations are needed to serve Holy Communion and where they are to be located; the number of ushers and acolytes, who sits where, etc. The priests may enter together and be seated together until the time of the presentation, when they join their parishes. Conversely, they may forego processing, and be seated with the Confirmands throughout the service. Optimally, the Confirmands process; however, processing and then seating may be unwieldy. Paper signs are placed on each pew designating where each parish's Confirmands sit.

After the number to be confirmed is known, the parishes are assigned to the two churches, maintaining the diversity of the deanery at each location. Recently, the Candidates at the Confirmation Event have written the Prayers of the People with a bishop, beforehand. Confirmation classes at the Confirmation Event have baked bread for the Eucharist beforehand. When possible, a layperson services as Bishop's Chaplain. The Confirmation services have become popular and extremely well attended events.

The Missioner works with the host parishes on the logistics of hospitality, important for the well being of everyone attending the event: the light reception following the service, determining a place for picture taking and prayer book signing; the availability of parking, rooms for vesting and coats, internal traffic flow; well-marked rest-rooms; cleanliness and health considerations (a nurse is present, when possible). No detail is inconsequential. The Missioner watches over these details, during the service. When these details are well taken care of, the people know that Confirmation is about them, they are happy, and they give generously at the Offertory, often designated for local mission.

When the Bishop, clergy and laity work closely together, the liturgy is complete, and a joyful and unifying thing.

*The Reverend Judith Semple Greene
Rector, Christ Church, Tashua*

Ways to Celebrate Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation in the Parish Community

The parish is to be made aware of the Confirmation Service and invited to take part in whichever local congregation within the Deanery it is being celebrated. It is a celebration of our communal life together. On the Sunday following the Deanery Confirmation service, the local parish should recognize and welcome the newly Confirmed, Received or Re-Affirmed in the context of the main liturgy of the day. Again our communal life is being celebrated. It is a day to celebrate the vocation to that which they have been called, that of being a Christian.

Ideas:

- Ask children in the Church School to make cards and bookmarks to give to those being recognized
- Ask parents and sponsors to write or share a remembrance of their own faith journey
- Consider the parts of worship where the candidates can share their gifts of leadership as liturgists (lectors, ushers, ministers of communion, oblationers), musicians or artists
- Have each Confirmand write and/or share a personal statement of faith. These can be created in forms other than the written word (piece of music, banner, collage, drawing) and displayed or shared in the service bulletin.
- In addition to being affirmed for their time of study and growth in faith, individuals can be commissioned for particular ways they want to share their time and talents with the congregation. This can also be printed in the bulletin.
- Gifts of a Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer* or a cross can be blessed and given
- Plan a reception or luncheon following worship

Prayers of the People

Deacon or other leader

In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the holy Church of God in every place, and especially for this parish and diocese, and for Andrew, James, and Wilfrido, our bishops, let us prayer to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those (*or "N.N."*) who were confirmed at (*name of parish*) yesterday; For those (*or "N.N."*) who were received into the communion of this Church [and] (those who have renewed their vows), and for those who sponsored them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the welfare of the world, for this nation and its leaders, for this city (*town, village, _____*), and for every city and community, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick, the suffering, the hungry, and the lonely, and those in any need or trouble, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of [*the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, (blessed N.) and*] all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

Silence.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect, such as Collect 6 or 16 in Lesser Feasts and Fasts (pp. 60 or 65) or the following Doxology:

For you anoint our head with oil and spread a table before us, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. *Amen.*

Adapted from *Leaving Home with Faith* by Elizabeth Caldwell (The Pilgrim Press) and a form suggested for use at Baptism or Confirmation in *The Ceremonies of the Eucharist* by Howard E. Galley (Cowley)



Following a Re-Affirmation of Faith (*From The Church of England*)

Presider: Almighty God,

we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized into your name.

Keep us faithful to our baptism,
and so make us ready for that day

when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.



Affirmation of Christian Vocation

When set within the Holy Eucharist, this order can be used to conclude the sending rite. The service may be adapted to other liturgical settings or other places within the liturgy.

Those recently Confirmed, Received or Re-affirmed together with their sponsors gather with the ministers at the baptismal font and lit Pascal candle.

The Celebrant addresses the congregation with these or similar words:

Dear Christian friends:

Baptized into the priesthood of Christ,

we are all called by the Holy Spirit

to offer ourselves to the Lord of all creation

in thanksgiving for all that God has done and continues to do for us.

It is our privilege to affirm those who are endeavoring

to carry out their vocation as Christians in the world.

A representative of the congregation says:

Through Holy Baptism God has set us free from sin

and made us members of the priesthood we share in Christ Jesus.

Through word and sacrament we have been nurtured in faith,
that we may give praise to God
and bear God's creative and redeeming Word to all the world.

The sponsors present each newly Confirmed, Received or Re-Affirmed person a gift (Bible, Book of Common Prayer, Cross, etc.) Each person presented may briefly comment on the significance of this event or journey.

The Celebrant addresses those affirming Christian vocation:

Name/s, both your work and your rest are in God.

Will you endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
in gratitude to God and in service to others,
at morning and evening, at work and at play,
all the days of your life?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

by the power of the Spirit you have knit these your servants
into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Look with favor upon them in their commitment to serve in Christ's name.

Give them courage, patience, and vision;
and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation
of witness to the world and of service to others;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The deacon or assisting layperson addresses the congregation with these or similar words:

Go out into the world in peace;

be of good courage;

hold to what is good;

return no one evil for evil;

strengthen the faint-hearted;

support the weak;

help the suffering;

honor all people;

love and serve our God,

rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Celebrant blesses the assembly:

The almighty and merciful God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

The deacon may dismiss the congregation:

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Adapted from *Holy Baptism and Related Rites*. Renewing Worship, Volume 3. Formation in Faith Related to Baptism.
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What Next? Life After Confirmation

Young people are often seen as perpetual table setters, leaf rakers, child caregivers, clean-up crews and car washers. Many are not passionate about such tasks. Like adults, young people are gifted in many areas and need to be invited to share their talents. Congregations need to embrace and fully include the newly Confirmed young adult just as any other adult member; being able to serve at the altar, on a Vestry or Search Committee, or any other parish committee. They can be part of the Soup Kitchen team or Pastoral Care Team that makes visitations to the ill and home bound. They can edit the parish newsletter and maintain the parish website. Their voices should be encouraged to be heard as part of any parish planning decision and be given responsibility (with adult mentorship and support if necessary) to live out those tasks.

Their ministry in the world should be encouraged and supported, whether it is their academic, paid or volunteer work in the community. Recognition of their individual gifts and providing opportunities for them to share in ministry can help incorporate them in the post-confirmation period, assuming the role of adulthood. Their sponsor or mentor can assist in keeping them connected, maintaining a supportive relationship that was begun during the preparation period.

Young people need to be invited, included and welcomed to share their gifts. They need to know that what they say and do matters. They will recognize condescension and tolerance and walk the other way, knowing when they are set apart for their age and not for who they are.

It is also important to offer learning opportunities for youth once they have been Confirmed, and for all adults! Faith formation is life-long, and does not stop once one is Confirmed. Questions to consider in planning on-going education for high school students might include:

- What biblical content, issues and themes would be appropriate to continue to explore, being mindful of world events and planning for the future (educationally, socially, vocationally)?
- How is service and mission, prayer and worship, being in community, learning and proclamation opportunities offered in addition to that which is offered for children?
- What theological issues about faith and life were raised during the Confirmation preparation period that can become content for future discussion and exploration?
- Are there opportunities for them to continue to explore their gifts and ministries in the parish, diocese or among other churches and groups? Are opportunities to live out peace and justice in the world available? Liturgically? Through mission?

Regular dedication to discipleship, service and mission is expressed every time we celebrate Holy Baptism. Mature members of the faith community should be engaged in learning contexts with younger members. Congregations need to be catechumenal communities, focused on the ministry of all the baptized, accepting the gifts of all ages.

*Sharon Ely Pearson
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