



The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland Guidelines for Confirmation

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The Right Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton

Bishop of Maryland

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Assistant Bishop of Maryland

Confirmation services are an integral and important part of our diocesan life together. The individuals you present bring an exciting energy, faith and love to our Church. The Confirmation service gathers family and friends from all generations to witness an individual's mature, adult commitment to faith and to the promises made for them at baptism.

The ceremony and presence of the bishop accentuate the gifts and importance of our Episcopal tradition and faith. It is in that spirit that your bishops have established diocesan standards for confirmation and offer support and resources for your Confirmation programs.

Confirmations and Receptions may be done as part of the regular bishops' visitations, on special feast days, and in regional and diocesan gatherings. The bishops also schedule diocesan Confirmation during the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

Remember, that Confirmation is an *individual adult rite of discipleship*. To receive the sacramental rite of Confirmation in the Diocese of Maryland, **we expect each candidate will have received quality instruction in the congregation** and that each person presented:

- should be old enough to make a mature decision. The minimum *recommended* age is 15, but pastoral exceptions are possible (see below).
- is a regular participant in the life, worship, education, and outreach of the congregation presenting them.
- will meet with the bishop before the Confirmation service.

Confirmation or Reception?

Candidates whose baptisms have been recorded in a denominational context and who wish to affirm their faith as adults shall be presented for **Confirmation**. Candidates who have been confirmed previously by a bishop in the historic succession (Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or Eastern Orthodox) **or** have made an adult affirmation of faith (baptized as

adults) may be presented for **Reception** into the Episcopal Church during a service of Confirmation.

About Preparation

Congregation-based preparation for Confirmation should include the basics of Christian faith and the Anglican expression of it. Preparation resources are available from the diocesan Resource Center. Because each candidate should be of such maturity as to be able to make meaningful vows, the minimum age we *recommend* is fifteen, but pastoral exceptions may be allowed for youth ages 12 to 14, but no younger than 12. Individual pastoral exceptions should be approved by the Vestry in advance.

At the Rite

- All Confirmation services are held in the context of the Holy Eucharist.
- On Sundays, use the appointed lessons of the day and liturgical colors for the season.
- At the presentation (BCP page 415), each Rector/Vicar and sponsors will stand in the order listed in the bulletin and introduce the candidate by saying, “On behalf of _____ Church, I present...”
- Candidates stand when their name is called and continue standing until **all** confirmands and those being received are presented.
- Those standing will be asked two questions (BCP page 415) and are expected to answer **clearly and loudly**.
- Both bishops prefer to **sit** for Confirmations. Please plan to provide a kneeling cushion to be placed before the seated bishop on which confirmands will kneel.
- At the time of Confirmation, the sponsor(s) comes forward and then, one-by-one, confirmands and those being received come forward.
- Confirmands **kneel** before the bishop; those being received **remain standing**. Sponsors are invited to stand behind and around candidates. Candidates will say their name in a **clearly and loudly** when asked. Note: To prevent crowding and enhance visibility, only the sponsor(s) may stand with those being confirmed or received.