



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

Guidelines for Confirmation Most Reverend Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS

1. Bishop will usually bring his own vestments. Please have sufficient altar servers (7 if incense is used; 6 servers otherwise to assure a miter and crozier bearer is available. In general one server for incense (if used), one for the cross, two for processional candles (if used) and one each for miter and crozier.
2. Bishop will arrive for the ceremony at least 45 minutes beforehand. He likes to spend some time speaking informally with the candidates in one group. This meeting is just for the candidates without parents, catechists and sponsors. Please make sure there are two adults present with the youth. If possible, please have the candidates gathered in one place **separate from the church** to facilitate this dialogue.
3. In general, please advise the candidates to be able to answer why they chose the confirmation name they did, why they are requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation at this time in their lives, and how they want to continue their faith journey. Please have the candidates knowledgeable about the renewal of baptismal promises, and the anointing with chrism as meaningful and important symbols. About one month before the ceremony, it would be helpful to have the candidates view the 7-minute “Momentum Studios” video presentation on the Sacrament of Confirmation. It may be found on *The Catholic Miscellany* YouTube channel at [youtube.com/watch?v=-t7oYIHb8Cg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t7oYIHb8Cg).
4. The candidates and sponsors do not process in with the Bishop, they are to be seated in their pews at least 5 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
5. For Sunday celebrations, solemnities, obligatory memorials and major feasts, the vestment color of the season, or the day will be used with the assigned readings of the day. Kindly refer to the Ordo. The Ritual Mass texts and proper color (red) are allowed in place of obligatory memorials, unless the Bishop has said he prefers otherwise. Just as the ritual texts and color for weddings and funerals are allowed to replace even obligatory memorials (and even Feasts, actually), Confirmation is likewise. The only prohibitions are below from the GIRM:
 - 372. Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on Solemnities, on the days within the Octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls’ Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week, and furthermore due regard is to be had for the norms set out in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves.

6. For weekday confirmation (on non-feasts and solemnities) **red vestments should be used.** Please note that the **Gloria** is to be included since it is required by use of the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation, even during Advent and Lent. The readings may be taken from the texts for Confirmation in the Lectionary for Ritual Masses VI (nos. 764-768). Please note: during the Easter Season, the first reading is to be taken from the Acts of the Apostles, the Old Testament readings are not to be used.
7. While the church greatly respects the uniqueness and individuality in each of its members, it holds that modesty is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and the “Teaching modesty to children and adolescents means awakening in them respect for the human person.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church). Candidates should dress appropriately, befitting the solemnity of the Confirmation liturgy. Young men are expected to wear a dress shirt with a tie and dress shoe, sport coat/suit jacket are optional. Young women should wear a modest dress, skirt and blouse, pant suit or dress pants and blouse and dress shoes. The following are not appropriate: tennis shoes/sneakers, jeans, tee shirt or polo shirts.
8. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor should introduce the candidates to the Bishop. It is not necessary to call their names at this point, but the **pastor should testify that the candidates are prepared and ready to receive the sacrament.**
9. For the Anointing with Chrism. The candidates are to stand across the front of the church (between the first row of pews and the sanctuary), with the sponsor standing directly behind. If the number of candidates exceeds the space, they should line up in the same manner after the first row of candidates is anointed (repeat as necessary). The sponsor is to place his or her right hand on the candidate’s shoulder. The candidates do not come up as if they are receiving Communion.
10. It is preferable that the candidates wear easily legible name tags. If name tags are not used, the candidate or sponsor should hold a name card as Bishop approaches them for the anointing. The cards are to be handed out before the candidates and sponsors enter the church. The pastor or deacon will hold the sacred chrism for the anointing. Some background music or a hymn should be played and/or sung during the anointing.
11. Lemons, bread, pitcher of water, towel and bowl are to be available for the Bishop to remove the sacred chrism from his hands. Note that one lemon sliced into 4 wedges is sufficient. The bread may be of any quality, but it should be torn into crouton size pieces. Please note that the lemons, bread, and the water after cleansing the Bishop’s hands should not be thrown into the trash. It must be buried or otherwise disposed of carefully since we are dealing with the sacred chrism.
12. Please note that Eucharistic Prayers I, II and III all have special inserts for confirmation Mass. These inserts may be downloaded at: charlestdiocese.org/divine-worship-and-sacraments/guidelines-for-confirmation. In most circumstances, the Bishop will use Eucharistic Prayer III and pray the Preface of the Holy Spirit II. Please have the Roman Missal prepared for this. However, if confirmation takes place within a Mass that has a proper preface, i.e. a solemnity such as the Assumption, or All Saints or in a Sunday Mass falling within a privileged season such as Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter, then one of the prefaces prescribed for that Mass will be used. Please consult the Ordo.

13. After the Post Communion prayer, the pastor is invited to speak, announcing a reception, and/or congratulating the confirmandi. The Bishop will usually have some comments of his own to make after the pastor speaks.
14. Usage of incense, choice of music are all at the discretion of the individual parish. Note, however that music should be appropriate to the season/feast/solemnity and occasion.
- Additionally, there should always be some music during the incensations if and when incense is used. This music may be simply instrumental. Please do not expect the Bishop to incense the altar and gifts at the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts in absolute silence. **Please instruct the musicians to provide music until the incensations are completed, even if simply instrumental.**
 - **The parish should make sure that the confirmandi have access to a printed program during the Mass if one is provided, and it is expected that they participate vocally in the Mass (responses, hymns, prayers).**
15. Please inform the candidates that they should:
- Know their confirmation name and why they chose it;
 - Offer their responses to the baptismal promises (“I do”), the prayer of chrismation (“AMEN”) and the Sign of Peace (“And with your spirit”) with some **enthusiasm**;
 - Not chew gum before or during the ceremony.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Usually, a confirmation ceremony should have at least 20 candidates. A smaller number must be approved by the Office of the Bishop when requesting a date.
- Pastors from each parish should be at their candidates confirmations even in the case that the confirmation is at another parish.
- On weekday evenings the confirmation Mass might be scheduled at 6:00, 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. While dinner with the Bishop beforehand is appreciated, it is not necessary.
- A Master of Ceremony for the Bishop will be assigned by the Office of the Bishop
- Please share these guidelines with deacons, sacristans, DRE’s, altar server coordinators, choir directors, parish liturgy coordinators.