



## Guidelines for Confirmation

Diocese of Maryland

July 2010

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 service gathers family and friends from all generations to witness an individual's mature, adult commitment to their 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 will also schedule diocesan confirmation during the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

It is important to emphasize here that confirmation is an individual adult rite of discipleship. To that end, to receive the sacramental rite of confirmation in the Diocese of Maryland, **it is expected that each candidate will have received quality instruction in the parish**, 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 gather to meet with the bishop before the service.

Your bishops firmly believe these to be important ingredients for confirmation and have dedicated the time and energy to support these expectations.

### *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.

### *Regarding Preparation*

A period of preparation should take place in the parish that includes the basics of the Christian faith and the Anglican expression of it. Preparation resources are available from the diocesan Resource Center. Each candidate should be of such maturity as to be able to make meaningful

vows that impact their lives. Therefore, the minimum age *recommended* by the Diocese of Maryland is 15, but pastoral exceptions may be allowed for youth 12 to 14, but no younger than 12. Individual pastoral exceptions should be approved by the Vestry.

### **At the Rite**

All services will be held in the context of the Holy Eucharist.

On Sunday visitations, the appointed lessons of the day and liturgical colors for the season are to be used.

At the presentation (BCP page 415), each rector/vicar and the sponsors will stand in the order listed in the bulletin and introduce his/her people using the appropriate words, first saying, “On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, I present....”

Those presented stand as their name is called and continue to stand until **all** confirmands and those being received have been 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) will come forward from the congregation sequentially as their turn comes. Individually, 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 the candidate. The candidate is expected to say his/her name in a loud and clear voice when asked.

In consultation with the Committee on Liturgy and Music and with the desire *not* to crowd the sanctuary and afford all adequate visibility, we will *not* have persons—other than the sponsor(s)—stand with those being confirmed or received. This applies to congregational confirmations, diocesan confirmations, and regional confirmations.

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