



liturgy and a deeper commitment to Christ and the Church. With more detail the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches:

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more living familiarity with the Holy Spirit—his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands. (1309)

Finally, besides the requirement of already being baptized, to be confirmed, a candidate must be in a state of grace. He or she should receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to Confirmation and engage in more intense prayer in order to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the courage and readiness to act on them.

PRINCIPLES OF INITIATORY CATECHESIS

For adolescents, catechesis for the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation is intended to prepare them for a full, conscious, and active participation not only in the Rite of Confirmation, but in the life of the Church. This preparation is intended to examine the specific aspects of mission, discipleship, Spirit, and witness in the adolescent's life and in the overall life of the Church.

Further, initiatory catechesis, in which preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is included, has certain necessary characteristics according to the *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)* and the *National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)*.

First, initiatory catechesis is comprehensive and structured. It looks to and covers what is “common” for the Christian, that is, the main tenets of our faith. Catechesis calls the candidate to profess his or her faith in Jesus Christ from the heart, to follow him faithfully, and to become his disciple.

Second, this catechesis is more than instruction: “it is an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life,” promoting discipleship in Christ, education in the knowledge of the faith and the life of faith so that the person feels deeply enriched in the Word of God. Such catechesis helps the person fulfill his or her baptismal responsibilities and profess faith from the heart.

Third, initiatory catechesis is a basic and essential formation of the Christian person. But it is also only a beginning. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation, whether all at once or at separate times, serves to encourage the initiated Christian to seek more solid nourishment of his or her faith in the life of the Church.

In addition, the preparation includes instruction on the Rites of Christian initiation, specifically the Rite of Confirmation. This includes an introduction to the symbol and forms, and offices and ministries at work in the Sacraments of Initiation.

In this specific case, a teenager's preparation for and reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation should not in any way be understood as a “graduation” from formal religious education or, in worse cases, the time the now fully initiated can begin the spiral toward eventually abandoning the faith altogether. Rather, reception of the Sacrament and the infusion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit ought to lead the newly confirmed to a deeper and more committed life of faith.

Send Out Your Spirit highlights the essential process intended by the Rite of Baptism for Children: that Baptism is to be followed by a lengthy faith formation that allows a person to make a personal commitment to the Christian faith.



How *Send Out Your Spirit* Incorporates the Characteristics of Initiatory Catechesis

The three primary characteristics of initiatory catechesis are a central part of the *Send Out Your Spirit* Confirmation process, especially in the following ways:

1. *Send Out Your Spirit* is comprehensive and structured. The content of the material is arranged to help the teens understand initial requirements for Church membership (Chapter 1) leading to a further presentation of the foundational elements of our faith: God (Holy Trinity), Christology and the life of Jesus, the place of the Scriptures in the life of the Church, ecclesiology and Church history (with special emphasis on lives of exemplary Christians), liturgy and sacraments, morality (including the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes), and the Church's social teaching. Chapter 9 focuses on Confirmation as the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit, delving into a deeper presentation of life in the Spirit, including the gifts of the Spirit. The basic Rite of Confirmation is explained near the time of the actual reception of the sacrament.
2. *Send Out Your Spirit* offers an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life. The process includes a combination of prayer experiences, community service suggestions, and faith-sharing activities interspersed within the content of each of the faith themes. These are labeled in many places in the Candidate's Handbook as "hand, heart, and mind" activities worthy of reflection.
3. *Send Out Your Spirit* encourages the further development of a teen's faith life. Expanding the definition of Confirmation as a Sacrament of maturity, *Send Out Your Spirit* helps the teens to understand the sacrament as one step in their *maturing faith*. The process of faith education does not end with reception of the sacrament. Concretely, the newly confirmed teen is challenged to consider and fill adult roles within the Church. Chapter 10, specifically, asks the teens to project themselves into several adult Christian vocations.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION PARTICIPANTS

This Confirmation preparation process can be conducted with any number of teenagers. Given that the teens themselves are in possession of the main catechetical content in the Candidate's Handbook, the material can be presented in many different ways, not the least of which requires the teens to read the material on their own and be evaluated through oral and written questioning by a catechist, sponsor, or parent.

However, given the necessity of participation by the local parish community in preparing teens for the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is most appropriate for many different adults to participate in the process. They include, but are not limited to, those in the following roles (more than one role may be taken by the same person):

Pastor. Together with the local bishop, the pastor determines the basic requirements for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation for the parish. These may include the length of the preparation time, the types and number of courses, and the age of the Confirmation candidates. The pastor will also serve as an occasional catechist during the preparation sessions.



Director of Religious Education (DRE). The DRE coordinates how immediate preparation for Confirmation fits within the whole of the parish's religious education program. For example, the DRE determines what prerequisites (e.g., courses, terms enrolled in religious ed) a teen will need before being enrolled in Confirmation preparation.

Coordinator of Youth Ministry (CYM). Adolescent catechesis, and in this specific case, Confirmation catechesis, may be the intersection of the responsibilities of the DRE and the CYM. Whereas the DRE's task is to fit Confirmation within the entire scope of ongoing religious education, the CYM coordinates how Confirmation preparation is part of the entire offering of total youth ministry in a parish: that is, amidst other social, service, and worship opportunities.

Confirmation Leader. This person organizes the process in conjunction with the pastor, DRE, and CYM. He or she gets the process started by contacting adult volunteers and potential candidates, setting a calendar based on the model chosen (see pages 10–11), arranging for meeting space, and leading an introductory meeting for candidates and parents.

Catechists. Catechists are responsible for teaching the material for all or parts of particular sessions. The "teaching" is done in several ways; for example, especially by summarizing and enriching the material covered in the Candidate's Handbook. Catechists should be trained as part of regular formational programs in the parish or diocese.

Sponsors. The sponsor is ideally the same sponsor (godparent) from Baptism. A sponsor assists the candidate by sharing in a close way his or her faith journey and preparation for Confirmation and helping the candidate live as a true witness of Christ. To be a sponsor, Church law requires that the person be a confirmed Catholic who has received Eucharist and is leading a life of faith. The sponsor cannot be a parent of the candidate. Besides attending the Rite of Confirmation itself, the sponsor may attend some sessions, meet with the candidate on a regular basis outside of class, participate in community service projects, and attend a retreat with the candidate. The Send Out Your Spirit Sponsor Handbook is offered as a component of the preparation process.

Parents. Parents are the primary educators of their children, especially in their life of faith. Much of this education takes place in their loving example, exhibited in their relationship to their spouse, to their children, and to God. However, this model is strengthened when parents "comment on the more methodical catechesis which their children later receive in the Christian community and help them to appropriate it" (GDC, 226). Confirmation preparation is a definite time for parents to verse themselves in the content of material being presented to better help their children receive the sacrament worthily. Parents should be encouraged to read and discuss the material from the Candidate's Handbook with their sons and daughters. Also, parents are expected to attend an introductory meeting. They are also expected to participate at liturgy with their children and to easily facilitate their children's participation in the process in other ways: for example, aiding in Christian service work, driving to group sessions. As a reminder to their children that Christian catechesis is ongoing, parents should also take it on themselves to enroll in an adult education course at the parish, attend a workshop, audit a course at a local Catholic college, or participate in a retreat. Finally, parents can help with many of the hospitality tasks of Confirmation preparation, like arranging for refreshments, scheduling car pools, and the like.

Parishioners. As the candidates are being initiated into a Church represented by the local parish, parishioners should know of and be involved in the preparation. This can be done in several ways. For example, parishioners can participate in community service



events with the teens and serve as “prayer partners” (praying for individual candidates by name throughout the time leading to Confirmation). More importantly, the candidates should participate more fully in parish worship and ministries.

Candidates. As determined by regulations by the diocesan bishop and the parish pastor, candidates for this process should be baptized teenagers who meet the other requirements as determined by many of the adults listed above. Once accepted into the process, the candidates must be responsible for things like attending sessions, reading the material in the Candidate’s Handbook, meeting with their sponsors, doing community service, and participating in Eucharist.

COMPONENTS OF THIS PROCESS

Send Out Your Spirit consists of the following components:

1. Candidate’s Handbook for Faith
2. Leader’s Manual
3. Sponsor’s Handbook

The Candidate’s Handbook provides a thorough introduction to key teachings and topics of our faith (see Catechetical Themes, pages 6–7 of this Manual). The main content of this Confirmation preparation process is found in the Candidate’s Handbook.

The format for each chapter of the Candidate’s Handbook revolves around introducing a topic with a relevant story or short lesson. The main content material for each chapter is organized into three or four main sections, with other subsections in each. Each main section includes discussion or journaling questions labeled with hand (service), heart (charity/prayer), and mind (knowledge) icons. The chapters also include one or two personal interest features, quotations from Scripture or writings of the saints (Word of God), and traditional prayers. All of these elements are related to the main topic of the chapter.

Also in the Candidate’s Handbook is a Glossary of selected terms and an Appendix with a Catholic Handbook for Faith, Sample Service Project Ideas, and 50 Questions the candidates are to record answers for at home and return to class.

The Sponsor’s Handbook offers a look back at the role of Christian sponsors in history. It reviews the qualifications and requirements for becoming a Confirmation sponsor. There are also short chapters providing help to adults for understanding and communicating with today’s teens, especially in the area of God, faith, and religion. The heart of the Sponsor’s Handbook is an overview of each chapter of the Candidate’s Handbook along with appropriate questions for discussion and activities for sponsors and candidates to work on together.

The Leader’s Manual is closely connected to the material in the Candidate’s Handbook. The Leader’s Manual provides several “how to use” tips for catechists and other adult leaders to break open the material lessons intended for either large or small groups.

Each chapter offers an introductory overview of the important content. Several lesson ideas are listed related to each main section of the Candidate’s Handbook. Completing every one of the lessons while covering the material in the Candidate’s Handbook is not required; rather, more than one suggestion per section is offered to allow for freedom to adapt the material as suited to the time and setting of the session. Also, Warm-Up/Breaktime ideas are offered for each chapter. These are meant to serve as session icebreakers and short activities to be used in between lessons.