**Policy Directives for Confirmation Sacramental Preparation**

**Diocese of El Paso**

**Introduction**

The sacrament of confirmation strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith. It imprints a character, enriches by the gift of the Holy Spirit the baptized continuing on the path of Christian initiation, and binds them more perfectly to the Church. (Canon 879).

The goal of the Confirmation Preparation Process is to prepare **high school youth** to receive the sacrament and to deepen the faith of the parish community. Maturing and Christian faith is a life-long journey. Confirmation preparation is a process and Christian growth based on the belief that adolescents are at a significant point in their faith journey where they are beginning to establish a personal faith identity. Through sharing their own journey and interaction with others, the candidates are assisted in identifying and understanding how God is working in their lives, and come to a new realization of faith within the context of the parish community.

(A Vision of Youth Ministry, USCC, 1976).

The Confirmation Preparation Process is a source of renewal for the whole parish community. The celebration of the rituals and the involvement of so many members of the parish – priests, parents, sponsors, teams, and youth are the sources of inspiration and spiritual renewal for the entire community.

**Program Duration and Design**

A minimum of two consecutive years of preparation is required for all confirmation candidates.

The preparation program for candidates for confirmation will require a minimum of

* 24 lessons at 1.5 hours for each lesson over a 7-month period,
* one retreat or day of reflection per year, and a
* 20-hour commitment to community service.

This minimum requirement is 36 hours of religious formation time. Some parishes will prefer to offer a longer preparation which is perfectly fine. What is stated above is the minimum requirements for Sacramento preparation.

The textbook to be used for Confirmation Preparation must approved and on the current Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series on the USCCB website.

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/CurrentConformityList.pdf>

A parish MAY NOT create their own local texts or program without written approval from the Diocesan Office of Religious Formation.

**Sponsor**

The sponsor is chosen at the beginning of the process. The sponsor journeys with the candidate throughout the Confirmation Preparation Process. The relationship is one of faith-sharer, witness, guide, and friend to the candidate. Therefore, the sponsor must be a

**practicing Catholic**, fully initiated in the Catholic Church and must be at least 16 years old.

**Parents may not be sponsors for their children. (Canon 874)**

**Parent/sponsor candidate orientation meeting**

The parish catechetical leader and or the Confirmation Coordinator and the Confirmation Catechist will meet with parents, sponsors, and youth to introduce them to the Confirmation Preparation Process and to help each group understand their respective role.

**Parent/Sponsor meetings**

Parents and sponsors of Confirmation Candidates will attend at least three sessions during the year to help strengthen their role as models of mature faith for their youth.

**Spiritual Development**

Growth in the life of the Spirit within each candidate is essential to the Confirmation Preparation Process. Consequently, programs include components that encourage and promote spiritual growth and understanding. These components include the preparation of faith themes found in the catechetical text for the sacrament of confirmation approved by the US bishops and found on the textbook conformity list on the USCCB website.

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/CurrentConformityList.pdf>

**Retreat /Day of Recollection**

A retreat or day of recollection is concentrated time away from normal activities and environment dedicated to reflection on the experience of God in our lives. Retreats are an important aspect of spiritual growth and instrumental in building community. At the same time, it is important to recognize it such a reflection and inclusion into community must be entered by choice. A retreat or day of recollection for Confirmation preparation are to be included as part of the process in both the first and second year.

**Service**

As the candidate grows in their knowledge of the Catholic Christian lifestyle, it is important that this faith commitment is evidenced in the attitude of generosity and service to others. Candidates will participate in five service projects each year approved by the PCL or Confirmation Coordinator.

**Records**

All candidates must present baptism and first Eucharist certificates at the beginning of the process in their first year. Ideally, these documents should be presented at the time of registration.