

Appendix

A Possible Confirmation Preparation Schedule

The Book of Occasional Services offers an “Enrollment in the Catechumenate” which can be adapted as a means of beginning a preparation program in the context of the Sunday liturgy. An additional beginning can involve a gathering (over a meal, preferably), with candidates, their parents and sponsors. Every gathering should begin grounded in prayer.

Winter: Epiphany, Lent, Easter: Candidates are identified and brief instruction is given while community building is occurring

- Participation in diocesan youth events
- Social gatherings
- Field trips
- Service projects
- Participation in worship, especially The Great Vigil of Easter
- Biblical study and story sharing

Summer: Pentecost: Personal exploration of faith (with reflection)

- Read recommended books (fiction and non-fiction)
- Meet with the sponsor at mutually convenient times (following safe church guidelines)
- Summer picnic with candidates & sponsors

Fall & Winter: Late Epiphany, Advent, Christmas & Epiphany: Seasonal instruction and practice of the faith, through the lectionary and parish life

- Old Testament
- Life of Christ
- Stewardship
- Deanery retreat

Winter & Spring: Lenten Season: A period of more intense practice and discipline

- Retreat with spiritual direction
- Study of Baptism
- Participation in The Great Vigil of Easter
- Spiritual gifts assessment
- Life of Ministry

Spring: Easter & Pentecost: Final preparations for Rite of Confirmation

- Deanery Retreat
- Meet with the bishop

*Sharon Ely Pearson
Children's Ministries & Christian Education Coordinator
Diocese of Connecticut*

Characteristics of a Christian Leader

St. Bonaventure wrote a very practical work on spiritual leadership in the 13th. century. He was the organizer who assisted St. Francis and gave order and structure to the Franciscan order. In this work he describes six qualities of a spiritual leader:

Zeal for righteousness. Moral sensitivity to anything unjust in himself (first) or others. Highlights the importance of purity.

Compassion. This should be demonstrated to those who are facing both physical and spiritual weaknesses. Today Bonaventure would describe this aspect as being a servant to those in need.

Patience. Bonaventure reminds leaders of the critical need for patience due to at least three reasons; leadership is exhausting and demanding work, there is little apparent return for all the efforts a leader makes, and many who are on the receiving end are ungrateful.

Good example. Leaders are models that other people look to and follow their example, therefore, make it good! The leader is no better than the followers and Bonaventure stresses humility and maturity.

Good judgment or discernment. This guides the leader in knowing both what to do and how to do it. In relationship to this he addresses how to encourage the spiritual and moral growth of the community. He also reminds his readers of the need for delegation and the danger of becoming buried under the heavy load of administration.

Devotion to God. While listed last, this is the most important quality because everything else depends upon it. A close personal relationship with God guides us in all our leadership responsibilities. Here Bonaventure mentions the need for public and private prayer and cultivating an awareness or mindfulness of God in all of life.

Summarized by Tom Schwanda from St. Bonaventure. *The Character of a Christian Leader* (originally titled *The Six Wings of the Seraph*), trans. Philip O'Mara. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1978.
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A Sample Letter to Sponsors or Mentors

Thank you for accepting the invitation to become a sponsor/mentor for a young person at (*church name*) who is considering being Confirmed in the coming year/s. He/she is now entering a new phase on their faith journey. As part of their Confirmation preparation, we are inviting them to get involved in some "Christian thinking" as they think about their lives, their values, their hopes, and their relationships with the meaningful people in their lives, while they examine the foundations of our faith.

The importance of a sponsor cannot be put too strongly. Confirmation is the mature decision of an individual to renew their baptismal vows and commit themselves as Christians to The Church. With Confirmation comes an adult role in the life of The Church. The sponsor is utilized as an adult within the Church who can guide the candidate by sharing his or her own Christian history and the feelings and learning's that have come out of that growth in the community. In this way, the Confirmand will find the process of preparing for confirmation to be a way into the life of the parish and not a graduation from Church School. New adult relationships will be opened as sponsor and young adult explore the questions of faith that will arise during the coming months.

As a sponsor you will not be responsible for "teaching." As they are thinking of their lives, you will be asked to share some of your thoughts and questions. The most important thing that you and your child do is spend some time together in order to know each other more. How you spend this time is up to you. The meetings do not have to be long, but should be in a public area or with others nearby (following safe church guidelines). Meet over coffee at a local diner, bookstore or fast food restaurant. Go to a movie. Please allow enough time for interaction. As this young person grows in the "knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," he or she will learn much about your relationship to God and faith in Jesus while reflecting on their life of faith.

There will be an Enrollment of the Candidates for Confirmation on (*date & time*) in which you will formally sponsor your young person. Confirmation will be held on (*date & time*) at (*parish, town*) with The Right Reverend (*name*). Our parish will celebrate this occasion the following day at (*time*) on (*date*).

An *Outline of the Faith*, or *The Catechism*, is found on pp. 844-862 of *The Book of Common Prayer*. You may find this helpful in focusing on some topics for conversation.

An Outline of the Faith - The Catechism

To Be Human:

- How do you go about making decisions?
- How many times do you have to consider how your decisions may affect the lives of others?
- How difficult is it for you to take responsibility for decisions that may not have brought about the harmony that you hoped for?
- Any stories from your own history would probably be greatly appreciated by your child.

Baptism:

- What are some of the benefits you feel you derive from being a member of the community of the Church of God?
- What has it meant to you to be a member of the "family of God?"
- How do you think this community of the faithful differs from any other group of people?
- Talk about promises; what they are; how one makes one; what are the responsibilities?

The Holy Scriptures:

- How do you do your own Bible reading? (Be honest!)
- Share your experiences of how the Bible has or has not been of help to you.

The Ten Commandments:

- What are your feelings about law in general?
- How do you feel about laws that help you?
- How do you feel about laws that impinge on your actions?
- How do you feel when you're in a hurry? Are you tempted to break the law? Have you ever gotten a ticket for speeding?

Prayer:

- Your sharing on this topic will be especially important. Experience has shown that children do not do well when discussing prayer with parents. You may need to take the lead.
- How often do you pray?
- Do you have any favorite prayers?
- Are there times when you find it very hard to pray?
- Talk about what you would like your prayer life to be.

Credo and Belief:

- How important is it to you to know what you believe?
- How often do you think consciously about what you believe?
- What kind of goals do you have for firming up your faith?
- How does your belief in God strengthen you to go about other business in life?
- How do you practice your faith in daily life? (work, school, community, friends, family)

Sacraments:

- Share what it means to you to receive Holy Communion.
- What has it meant to you to be a regular worshipper at the Eucharist?

- In what ways, if any, have you availed yourself of the other sacramental rites of the Church?
- Has the Church had a sacramental ministry to you at time of illness or any other crisis in your life?
- What are the signs of God's love in each of your lives?

Church and Ministry:

- What does it mean to you to be a member of a worshipping, ministering body of people who are concerned with doing the will of God?
- How does the Church, in your experience, seek to determine the will of God?
- Why and how much to you love your church?
- Do you pray regularly for the ministry of the Church?
- Do you pledge regularly for the spread of the Kingdom?
- How do you arrive at the amount you pledge? Do you tithe?
- What are some of your ministries, outside of and within the Church?

Christian Hope:

- What are your feelings about love and death?
- What does the resurrection mean to you?
- What are some of your experiences with dealing with loss?
- What are your hopes for the future?

Youth in Mission: Experiencing the Power of the Living God

I. “*I needed to be stretched and taken out of my comfort zone*”

In our discussions I was grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences with youth in mission. These young people are usually 15 years of age or older. By far, the formative power of such experiences convinces me that most of our young people desperately need to have an experience of mission to truly taste and see the joy of believing in the power of God to save, which Confirmation implies. For all the good will and dedication, which we put into the many “discipleship” programs in the recent past, I believe we are spinning our wheels for nothing, in most cases.

I can recall a forum at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA, in 2000 when the young people, Latinos, African Americans, and others mostly Caucasians – mostly from middle class homes, however – shared their experience with adults who listened eagerly. The young people testified that the mission trip had helped them to know Jesus Christ in a way that they had never before. One adult asked, “Why is it that young people have to go outside their parish – even their own town, state or country – to encounter Jesus Christ?” One youth replied, and the others nodded assent, “Because I needed to be stretched and taken out of my comfort zone.” In my view, we need to be with people who fully rely on God on a day to day basis . . . with those whose only hope is God. In that moment, the Gospel becomes real. Our culture is one in which the theology of glory prevails; a culture in which the theology of the cross is difficult to access. That God is for us means precious little in the face of human pain and suffering of which young people are not always aware experientially. Do we preach Christ crucified?

From a theological vantage point, I believe that youth mission trips put us in touch with the distinction between *faith as fiducia* (trust in God) and *faith as assensus* (assent to doctrinal propositions). Theologians are beginning to think that nothing has done more to alienate modern folk from religion – and the decline of Orthodox Protestantism (mainline Protestant churches). Even our own conversation

surrounding Confirmation often focuses on curricula and learning what it means to be an Episcopalian – not about experiencing the power of the living God.

II. *Shared deprivation for different reasons*

In conversations we stumbled upon interesting common ground, since our group is comprised of people who serve communities that are residential (towns and suburbs) and urban. We were amazed to discover how similar our struggles are. Communities that are fortunate and less fortunate both face the enormous challenge of dealing with fragmentation. In both cases, family life is seriously threatened by the schedules we keep. I believe that experiencing family life as lively, energizing, and intimate is critical to understanding the Baptismal Covenant. The theological adage rings true: *quicquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur* – in other words, faith is where you find it; each experiences God according to one's context. Our young people sorely lack the sense of community, which is critical to understanding the church and its mission. In the family, one's conduct and moral values are shaped by the norms of the community. Again, religion is caught, not taught.

Interestingly, we learned that the two income family of the more fortunate (not necessarily "wealthy") is fragmented because not enough time is spent together, often because of commitments related to maintaining a lifestyle which justifies one's existence; low, also two income families – predominantly in our urban congregations – share a similar struggle: to survive they need two incomes and several jobs! In fact the two groups have a lot in common. Can something be done to learn from each other? Partner parishes make a lot of sense if undertaken not only for purposes of "helping poorer churches to survive" but also to deepen our sense of Baptismal life. I believe that the opportunity for mutual spiritual enrichment awaits.

The Reverend Irvin "Sherm" Gagnon

Vicar, All Saints Episcopal Church, Meridan ~ February 26, 2004

When is the Group Ready for a Mission Trip?

So when are teens going to be ready for a mission trip? Only the individual youth leader can answer that question. But our students are more likely to be ready when these ministry steps have been established:

1. The youth group has a good sense of what compassion is all about. In this country many of us don't like to think of ourselves as rich. But if you've done much traveling to other parts of the world, you know that even our poorest people have much more than those in the truly impoverished parts of the world. The sad thing is American young people often don't realize how blessed they are. They've been indoctrinated into a lifestyle of consumerism, as have many adults. It's so much a part of us that often we don't even see it.

Our youth group represents our "Jerusalem" in the Great Commission. It starts locally. If we want our teens to develop a lifestyle for missions, we must awaken in them the desire to exhibit compassion and charity at home. We need to teach compassion and charity in our youth group meetings.

One way of teaching this principle is to use simulations. Host a "poverty" meal with varying levels of food and service. Some will be fed steak and others will go hungry. Or you could plan a "homeless for the night" experience. Another option is to participate in events such as the "30 Hour Famine" which draws attention to the plight of the hungry.

2. An active local service ministry has been established. Our youth groups need to be able to minister at home before we send them to minister abroad. Some believe that taking our teens on a mission trip will wake them up to the needs around them, but I think this isn't usually the case. Without an active local service ministry already in place, it's too easy for our kids to come back home and fall back into their old

patterns. They had a nice trip with lots of memories but no real long-term changes. Ministering locally is our "Judea." There's no shortage of needs when we look around our communities. It's every bit as important to meet the needs in our community as it is to meet the needs in Mexico, the Caribbean, or Africa.

There are many local service organizations with which to partner. There are many books that offer lots of great service ideas for your youth groups. Take the time to establish a rhythm of local service, and you'll further enhance the service aspect of future mission trips. And our teens will be more in tune to ministering locally when they get back home.

3. The youth group has gone on cross-cultural ministry experiences within a short drive from home.

Before immersing youth in a completely different country and culture, let them minister to those in their own country who come from significantly different cultural backgrounds. Our teens need to grasp the huge differences in culture and lifestyle within this country. Cross-cultural ministry experience in this country is our "Samaria." Samaria, though adjacent to Judea, was a foreign culture to the Jews. And like many misunderstood cultures and people within North America, Jews considered Samaria, and everything within it, offensive. When traveling, the Jews did all they could to avoid stepping foot in Samaria. But Christ commanded his disciples to go there and share the Gospel before they went on to the rest of the world.

Most church denominations have ministry projects set up that serve in cross-cultural settings. There are also parachurch organizations doing the same thing. Most of these ministries are ready and willing to partner with youth groups. Do a little research and make a few phone calls and you can be established in this sort of ongoing outreach ministry.

Ready for the Big Time

Of course, the individual youth worker will know best whether his or her teens are ready for a short-term mission trip. We may find our kids ready for a big trip even before we've accomplished Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria ministry experiences. Or we may be doing all of these and find our teens still aren't ready. It's an individual call.

Once we make the decision, we must allow ample time to prepare everyone for the trip. It's important to meet often, ideally starting about six months ahead of time, focusing everyone on the experience ahead and spending time in the word and prayer. A great idea is to do a team-building activity such as a ropes course.

And remember, just because a person can raise the money to pay for the trip doesn't necessarily mean that he or she should go on the trip. This is ministry. The purpose is to serve and to share Christ. It's a tough decision to make, but those who aren't spiritually ready should be excluded from the trip. Consider setting stringent criteria for potential participants. Use written testimonies and interviews by the leaders to help guide your decisions. Mission trips are reflections on our congregations, so it's important to send our best.

Excerpt from "The End of the Youth Mission Trip as We Know It" by Jeff Edmondson
Youthworker Journal – May/June 2001

A Time of Reflection: A Model from Trinity Episcopal Church, Newtown, CT

For nine months, Confirmands meet monthly with a mentor in addition to two-hour classes with the Rector and Youth & Family Minister.

Included in the requirements is the writing of reflection papers on the following subjects:

- ✦ Reflection on The Eucharist: Describe each of the parts of the Eucharist and what they mean to you personally
- ✦ Reflection on the spiritual life of your parents: Interview your parents and reflect on their lifelong habits of prayer and spiritual growth
- ✦ Reflection on your own spiritual journey: Where have you come from so far?
- ✦ Reflection on your community service (Note: there is a requirement of ten hours of community service)
- ✦ Reflection on the Vestry Meeting: What have you learned about the ministry of the parish from the Vestry meeting you attended? (Note: Confirmands are required to attend a Vestry meeting. Trinity has two youth representatives on Vestry; this is a popularly requested ministry.)
- ✦ Reflection on the Commission meeting: What have you learned about the ministry of the Commission from the meeting you attended? (Note: Confirmands can choose among any of the commission meetings to attend.)
- ✦ Final essay: Look at the promises that were made for you in Holy Baptism and which you take on in Confirmation: based on these, tell why you believe you are ready to affirm your faith as an adult in ministry in the church through the Rite of Confirmation OR based on these promises, share why you are not ready.

Finally, each meets individually with us to discuss their choices for the ministries they will take on as an adult in the community of faith and in the world.

*The Reverend Kathleen Adams-Shepherd
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Newtown*

One Deanery's Model: The Greater Bridgeport Deanery

When the Deanery is an active combination of Clergy and Lay Persons, its participation in Confirmation makes the rite liturgy as commonly defined, the work of the people. Truly, it is God's work in and among us that we celebrate. The Bishop's Laying-on-of-Hands is the central sign of that work in Confirmation.

The Greater Bridgeport Deanery, composed of 16 parishes in Bridgeport and the immediately surround area, is particularly well organized and active in mission. Credit goes to our part-time Missioner, a layperson who has brought us into conversation with one another, built trust, involved the laity, and focused us on mission.

We are blessed with great diversity in our deanery. To demonstrate our common purposed in the midst of diversity and to accommodate the numbers being Confirmed, we hold 2 services at 2 locations simultaneously, using one bulletin. Typically, one location is an urban parish, and the other suburban. Great care goes into the bulletin, so that artwork reflects the spirit of youth; the bulletin is a keepsake. The four-page bulletin lists by name and parish each candidate for the Laying-on-of-Hands. The format is available on disk by request to the Bishop's office.

The planning is the responsibility of the Liturgy Chair of the Deanery Executive Board and Missioner. Parishes volunteer to host the event. The Liturgy Chair meets with each Rector and any designated staff to choose the Propers and the hymns; at least one is in Spanish. The Gospel is proclaimed in both English and Spanish. The Gospel is printed in both languages, along with responses used throughout the service. We use the hymnal and prayer books in the pew, printing only the Spanish hymn.

Together, they host parish Rectors and Deanery Liturgy Chair outlines the logistics of how candidates arrive at the Bishop's chair and how they exit. Typically, the Bishop's Chaplain or a Deacon assists the Bishop at the Bishop's chair, holding the crozier. An acolyte may hold the Prayer Book for the bishop. A Deacon assists the Confirmands in kneeling and standing. Parish by parish, the Confirmands exit the pews to the side, when possible, and gather up front on the side with their priest. The priest moves to the Bishop's right. The Confirmands, holding a white 3" x 5" card with their full name and the particular rite approach the bishop one at a time, hand the card to the priest, and kneel before the Bishop. The priest reads the name, and the rite to the Bishop, who proceeds with the Laying-on-of-Hands. Every effort is made to afford the congregation a full view of the candidate to permit the congregation's total participation in prayer. The candidate exits to the other side and goes to the back of the church and down the center aisle to resume his or her seat.

First, one side of the church is Confirmed, and then the alternate side. The Liturgy Chair often acts as usher to keep the flow of Confirmands moving.

Confirmands arrive and are seated in the pews an hour before the service begins. A rehearsal of the Laying-on-of-Hands procedure takes place either before or after the Bishop speaks with the Confirmands prior to the service.

The Liturgy Chair and the host rectors determine how many stations are needed to serve Holy Communion and where they are to be located; the number of ushers and acolytes, who sits where, etc. The priests may enter together and be seated together until the time of the presentation, when they join their parishes. Conversely, they may forego processing, and be seated with the Confirmands throughout the service. Optimally, the Confirmands process; however, processing and then seating may be unwieldy. Paper signs are placed on each pew designating where each parish's Confirmands sit.

After the number to be confirmed is known, the parishes are assigned to the two churches, maintaining the diversity of the deanery at each location. Recently, the Candidates at the Confirmation Event have written the Prayers of the People with a bishop, beforehand. Confirmation classes at the Confirmation Event have baked bread for the Eucharist beforehand. When possible, a layperson services as Bishop's Chaplain. The Confirmation services have become popular and extremely well attended events.

The Missioner works with the host parishes on the logistics of hospitality, important for the well being of everyone attending the event: the light reception following the service, determining a place for picture taking and prayer book signing; the availability of parking, rooms for vesting and coats, internal traffic flow; well-marked rest-rooms; cleanliness and health considerations (a nurse is present, when possible). No detail is inconsequential. The Missioner watches over these details, during the service. When these details are well taken care of, the people know that Confirmation is about them, they are happy, and they give generously at the Offertory, often designated for local mission.

When the Bishop, clergy and laity work closely together, the liturgy is complete, and a joyful and unifying thing.

*The Reverend Judith Semple Greene
Rector, Christ Church, Tashua*

Ways to Celebrate Confirmation, Reception and Re-Affirmation in the Parish Community

The parish is to be made aware of the Confirmation Service and invited to take part in whichever local congregation within the Deanery it is being celebrated. It is a celebration of our communal life together. On the Sunday following the Deanery Confirmation service, the local parish should recognize and welcome the newly Confirmed, Received or Re-Affirmed in the context of the main liturgy of the day. Again our communal life is being celebrated. It is a day to celebrate the vocation to that which they have been called, that of being a Christian.

Ideas:

- Ask children in the Church School to make cards and bookmarks to give to those being recognized
- Ask parents and sponsors to write or share a remembrance of their own faith journey
- Consider the parts of worship where the candidates can share their gifts of leadership as liturgists (lectors, ushers, ministers of communion, oblationers), musicians or artists
- Have each Confirmand write and/or share a personal statement of faith. These can be created in forms other than the written word (piece of music, banner, collage, drawing) and displayed or shared in the service bulletin.
- In addition to being affirmed for their time of study and growth in faith, individuals can be commissioned for particular ways they want to share their time and talents with the congregation. This can also be printed in the bulletin.
- Gifts of a Bible, *The Book of Common Prayer* or a cross can be blessed and given
- Plan a reception or luncheon following worship

Prayers of the People

Deacon or other leader

In peace, let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the holy Church of God in every place, and especially for this parish and diocese, and for Andrew, James, and Wilfrido, our bishops, let us prayer to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those (*or "N.N."*) who were confirmed at (*name of parish*) yesterday; For those (*or "N.N."*) who were received into the communion of this Church [and] (those who have renewed their vows), and for those who sponsored them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the welfare of the world, for this nation and its leaders, for this city (*town, village, _____*), and for every city and community, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick, the suffering, the hungry, and the lonely, and those in any need or trouble, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of [*the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, (blessed N.) and*] all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

Silence.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect, such as Collect 6 or 16 in Lesser Feasts and Fasts (pp. 60 or 65) or the following Doxology:

For you anoint our head with oil and spread a table before us, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. *Amen.*

Adapted from *Leaving Home with Faith* by Elizabeth Caldwell (The Pilgrim Press) and a form suggested for use at Baptism or Confirmation in *The Ceremonies of the Eucharist* by Howard E. Galley (Cowley)



Following a Re-Affirmation of Faith (*From The Church of England*)

Presider: Almighty God,

we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized into your name.

Keep us faithful to our baptism,
and so make us ready for that day

when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.



Affirmation of Christian Vocation

When set within the Holy Eucharist, this order can be used to conclude the sending rite. The service may be adapted to other liturgical settings or other places within the liturgy.

Those recently Confirmed, Received or Re-affirmed together with their sponsors gather with the ministers at the baptismal font and lit Pascal candle.

The Celebrant addresses the congregation with these or similar words:

Dear Christian friends:

Baptized into the priesthood of Christ,

we are all called by the Holy Spirit

to offer ourselves to the Lord of all creation

in thanksgiving for all that God has done and continues to do for us.

It is our privilege to affirm those who are endeavoring

to carry out their vocation as Christians in the world.

A representative of the congregation says:

Through Holy Baptism God has set us free from sin

and made us members of the priesthood we share in Christ Jesus.

Through word and sacrament we have been nurtured in faith,
that we may give praise to God
and bear God's creative and redeeming Word to all the world.

The sponsors present each newly Confirmed, Received or Re-Affirmed person a gift (Bible, Book of Common Prayer, Cross, etc.) Each person presented may briefly comment on the significance of this event or journey.

The Celebrant addresses those affirming Christian vocation:

Name/s, both your work and your rest are in God.

Will you endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
in gratitude to God and in service to others,
at morning and evening, at work and at play,
all the days of your life?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

by the power of the Spirit you have knit these your servants
into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Look with favor upon them in their commitment to serve in Christ's name.

Give them courage, patience, and vision;
and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation
of witness to the world and of service to others;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The deacon or assisting layperson addresses the congregation with these or similar words:

Go out into the world in peace;

be of good courage;

hold to what is good;

return no one evil for evil;

strengthen the faint-hearted;

support the weak;

help the suffering;

honor all people;

love and serve our God,

rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Celebrant blesses the assembly:

The almighty and merciful God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

The deacon may dismiss the congregation:

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Adapted from *Holy Baptism and Related Rites*. Renewing Worship, Volume 3. Formation in Faith Related to Baptism.
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What Next? Life After Confirmation

Young people are often seen as perpetual table setters, leaf rakers, child caregivers, clean-up crews and car washers. Many are not passionate about such tasks. Like adults, young people are gifted in many areas and need to be invited to share their talents. Congregations need to embrace and fully include the newly Confirmed young adult just as any other adult member; being able to serve at the altar, on a Vestry or Search Committee, or any other parish committee. They can be part of the Soup Kitchen team or Pastoral Care Team that makes visitations to the ill and home bound. They can edit the parish newsletter and maintain the parish website. Their voices should be encouraged to be heard as part of any parish planning decision and be given responsibility (with adult mentorship and support if necessary) to live out those tasks.

Their ministry in the world should be encouraged and supported, whether it is their academic, paid or volunteer work in the community. Recognition of their individual gifts and providing opportunities for them to share in ministry can help incorporate them in the post-confirmation period, assuming the role of adulthood. Their sponsor or mentor can assist in keeping them connected, maintaining a supportive relationship that was begun during the preparation period.

Young people need to be invited, included and welcomed to share their gifts. They need to know that what they say and do matters. They will recognize condescension and tolerance and walk the other way, knowing when they are set apart for their age and not for who they are.

It is also important to offer learning opportunities for youth once they have been Confirmed, and for all adults! Faith formation is life-long, and does not stop once one is Confirmed. Questions to consider in planning on-going education for high school students might include:

- What biblical content, issues and themes would be appropriate to continue to explore, being mindful of world events and planning for the future (educationally, socially, vocationally)?
- How is service and mission, prayer and worship, being in community, learning and proclamation opportunities offered in addition to that which is offered for children?
- What theological issues about faith and life were raised during the Confirmation preparation period that can become content for future discussion and exploration?
- Are there opportunities for them to continue to explore their gifts and ministries in the parish, diocese or among other churches and groups? Are opportunities to live out peace and justice in the world available? Liturgically? Through mission?

Regular dedication to discipleship, service and mission is expressed every time we celebrate Holy Baptism. Mature members of the faith community should be engaged in learning contexts with younger members. Congregations need to be catechumenal communities, focused on the ministry of all the baptized, accepting the gifts of all ages.

*Sharon Ely Pearson
Children's Ministries & Christian Education Coordinator
Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut*