

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT
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To: All Pastors, Parochial Administrators and Priest Moderators
All Directors of Religious Education
All Elementary and High School Principals
All High School Chaplains

From: Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano

Re: Confirmations 2024-25

Date: Monday, August 26, 2024

As we begin a new pastoral year, I think it would be helpful to address several issues related to the preparation and celebration of Confirmation for the upcoming year.

Confirmation Norms 2024-25:

Accompanying this memo are the liturgical norms governing the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation from September 2024 through June 2025. They include some minor revisions to the norms that were followed this past year. If you have any questions, please contact my office for clarification.

Request for Confirmations in Spring, 2025:

Accompanying this memo is the request form for Confirmations that will be celebrated from February 2025 through June 2025. Please follow the directions and return all requests before the deadline. Unlike in past years, if a request is not received before the deadline, it is likely that your celebration of Confirmation will be delayed to the Fall of 2025.

Confirmation Parent meetings:

As you are aware, I will be hosting nine deanery meetings for all parents whose young persons will be celebrating Confirmation during the 2024-25 pastoral year. This means that in certain cases, my meeting will follow the actual celebration of Confirmation. In such cases, parents should nonetheless be invited and encouraged to attend.

Separately, you will receive my personal invitation to the Confirmation parents of your region, asking them to attend their respective meeting. The invitation will be forwarded to all principals from the Office of the Superintendent and DREs from the Institute for Catholic Formation. My office will send the appropriate invitation to all pastors of each deanery. I ask that all DREs and Principals

electronically send your respective invitation directly to your parents so that they can make provision to attend the regional meeting.

Formation of Sponsors: Working with the Institute for Catholic Formation, I have recorded several videos that may be used for the formation of sponsors and a new learning path has been created in our diocesan online platform. All parish leaders will receive information from the Institute in the coming weeks about this formational opportunity. Please share this information with your sponsors, so that they can be better formed to serve in this important role on behalf of the Confirmation candidate.

Age for Confirmation Sponsors: As you know, Canon Law stipulates several eligibility requirements for anyone to serve as a godparent for the Sacraments of Initiation. One of these requirements is the sponsor have reached the age of 16.

In recent months, several inquiries have been made about the possibility of someone under the age of 16 serving as a sponsor for the sacrament of Confirmation. This has been the case when a younger sibling asks an older confirmed sibling to serve in this role. I am open to examining such requests on a case-by-case basis.

To make such a request, the pastor should meet with the parents and proposed sponsor, ascertain the maturity of the proposed sponsor (including whether the person is seriously practicing the Faith, attending Sunday Mass and has the appropriate maturity) and write to me asking permission on the family's behalf. Such permission, if granted, will be done in writing.

Many thanks for your cooperation and support in allowing the celebration of Confirmation to be one that will bear great spiritual fruit in the lives of our young people, sponsors, and parents.



Calendar Request Form for Confirmation Ceremony

Spring 2025

General

Parish Name	
Town	
Contact Person	
Telephone	
Email	
Expected Number of Candidates	
How many Ceremonies are required?	
Will you combine with another parish?	
Parish Name and Location of Confirmation	
Additional Information	
Date of your Retreat	

Please provide any dates/times that are **not** available for your parish to celebrate Confirmation:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Kindly return this form before September 15, 2024 to carlos.mesquita@diobpt.org

DIRECTIVES FOR CONFIRMATIONS
FALL, 2024-SPRING 2025

Effective: September 1, 2024

The following guidelines will be observed for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Bridgeport from September 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

GENERAL NORMS

1. The conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be prayed within a Celebration of the Word of God. Mass will not be celebrated.
2. **All Candidates for Confirmation must wear white gowns.**
3. Each candidate is to **wear a nametag** with his or her **Confirmation name** printed legibly in large print.
4. **Sponsors** ordinarily stand behind their candidate during the rite of Confirmation. However, whether they place their hands on the shoulder of their candidate will be dependent upon the consent of the candidate and his or her parents.
5. The **minimum number of candidates** needed for the celebration of Confirmation in any parish is **40 candidates**.
6. If a parish has fewer than 40 candidates, they may either (1) combine with another parish to reach that number or (2) celebrate Confirmation every other year, combining two classes in the one ceremony. If a parish combines Confirmation classes over a two-year period, there is no minimum number needed to have a parish celebration.

NORMS FOR CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT

7. **Altar servers:** The conferral of Confirmation requires **five** altar servers when a bishop is the celebrant. If this number cannot be met, please inform the bishop's Master of Ceremonies a few days in advance. For a bishop, required servers are a cross bearer, two candle bearers and two insignia bearers (miter and crozier); white gloves are worn by the insignia bearers and are brought to the parish by the Master of Ceremonies. All altar servers should be vested and ready for the rehearsal **30 minutes before** the ceremony begins.
8. All candidates and sponsors must be seated in church **10 minutes before** the start of the ceremony. Time permitting, this will allow the Bishop to address the sponsors and the congregation before the start of Confirmation.
9. **Incense** is not used during the celebration of Confirmation.
10. If available, a **lapel microphone** with fresh batteries should be made available for the Bishop's use.

11. **A stock of Sacred Chrism** is normally brought by the Bishop, but not by a visiting bishop.
12. In the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Bishop will wear a red or white cope for the conferral of confirmation within a Celebration of the Word of God.
13. Since Confirmation is conferred within a Celebration of the Word of God, the *Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass* contained in Chapter Two of the *Order of Confirmation for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (2016 edition) is employed.
14. The **readings** for the Service must be indicated on the planning sheet. Since the *Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass* is used, the readings are taken from those found in the *Ritual Mass of Confirmation* as specified above, with the traditional order of readings being followed in choice selection, “that is, from the Old Testament, the Apostle, and the Gospel”¹.
15. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pastor/Administrator will go to the ambo and present the candidates to the Bishop **either as a group or by individual name**. There is no formula for this presentation in the *Order of Confirmation* so the Pastor/Administrator must create it themselves. The Bishop will ask the congregation to show its approval with a round of applause, followed by an instruction for all to be seated.
16. When the Bishop has finished his homily, he will stand at the chair and invite those to be confirmed to stand for the renewal of baptismal promises.
17. The Bishop will **sit** for the anointing with Chrism (1) at the presider’s chair; (2) in a chair that is placed in front of the altar (if space permits) or (3) in a chair placed in another prominent place in the sanctuary. Candidates will kneel before the Bishop to receive the sacrament, using a kneeler that will be placed before the chair. The Pastor will hold the Vessel with the Chrism standing or sitting on the Bishop’s right.
18. The Bishop will **not shake hands** with the candidate at the sign of peace. He will simply greet the candidate with “Peace be with you” and the candidate will respond “And with your spirit.” Candidates should be instructed accordingly.
19. The Bishop will **cleanse his hands after Confirmation by using lemon juice, water, and a towel**.
20. Music must always be played during the anointing. Appropriate Sacred Music for this particular moment in liturgical ritual is the chant “*Veni, Creator Spiritus,*” or an equivalent.
21. **The Universal Prayer of the Faithful:**

¹ OC 37.

- a. The Universal Prayer of the Faithful follows the *Anointing with Chrism*. The formula contained in the *Order of Confirmation for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (2016 edition) is employed.
 - b. After the minister of Confirmation says the invitatory, the individual intercessions are to be proclaimed by the Deacon of the Word, or in his absence, by the Reader.
22. The pastor's remarks should immediately follow the recitation of the Our Father. He is invited to thank all those involved in preparing the candidates for the sacrament and offer instructions regarding photographs.
23. Ordinarily, the Bishop will be available for **pictures** immediately after the Ceremony.
 - a. The candidates and sponsors should remain in their places at the end of the Ceremony. Photos will be taken in front of the sanctuary, maintaining a line formation.
 - b. Other family who wishes to be included in photographs should be instructed to wait until all the candidates have had their individual photos taken with the Bishop. These photographs will not include the bishop.
24. It is expected that the parish provide a **stipend** for the Bishop and his Master of Ceremonies. These are used for charitable works and business travel. An amount of \$400 per session is suggested for the Bishop and \$100 per session for the Master of Ceremonies. Please make the Bishop's stipend check out to the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano and please call the office to confirm the name of the Master of Ceremonies a week prior to the celebration.