**CONFIRMATION CEREMONY 2017**

Making Confirmation is a decision, a choice, we make personally to follow Jesus and to live and love like him. In the Sacrament of Confirmation the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live life as God’s child and asks for God’s Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with Chrism receives the strength to witness to God’s love in word and deed. The person is then a fully-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit comes to strengthen us for our mission. It means living as a true disciples of Jesus in our daily lives.

The Holy Spirit does not force his gifts on us. If we are open to them they liberate us and enable us to live and act as responsible children of God and followers of Jesus Christ. If we are led by the Spirit and are open to his gifts we will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, self- control.”

The sacrament of Confirmation is about welcoming and celebrating the presence, gifts and action of the Holy Spirit in our lives, thus, enabling us to grow in faith.

**GUIDELINES**

The preparation is a focused journey from September to the celebration of the sacrament on Confirmation day.

**Recommendations at parish level.**

1. Consultation and planning is necessary between the parish and school staff on the programme of preparation. Arrange a meeting of the teachers involved to plan, ideally in the First Term.
2. Discuss stages of preparation. Preparation could include an Enrolment Sunday, where the parents formally present their children and commit to the programme, a Parent Meeting, the provision of the Sacrament of Penance for the children and their families and the Confirmation Ceremony.

**3** The process of preparation for the ceremony needs to include a discussion on fair representation and involvement of all schools in the parish.

**4** Keep the focus on the celebration of the sacrament. Keep it simple!

**6** There is a danger of being over rehearsed, so not more than two or three sessions should be sufficient to practice in the church.

**7** To celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation in a dignified and sacred way we ask that no photographs or recording take place during the ceremony*. (Liturgical Guidelines)*

**8** Photographs with names of candidates for confirmation should not be displayed in the church or in confirmation booklets. *(Child Protection Guidelines)*

**THE CONFIRMATION CEREMONY**

**The ceremony needs to be simple, reverent, meaningful, engaging and sufficiently brief to hold the attention of the children and their families.**

**1 Understanding Liturgy**

We need to understand that Liturgy is the action of the whole community gathered. Liturgy is about participation rather than performance. Participation involves engaging in the ceremony as fully as possible in the following ways; Mass responses, reading, listening, silence and singing, including attention to, and understanding of all that is happening in the ceremony. No one role in the ceremony is superior to another. Neither is it about *‘jobs’* to involve as many children as possible! What really matters is the individual engagement in, and understanding of, what it is we are doing in the ceremony itself.

**2 Singing**

Singing is an integral part of the Confirmation Liturgy and is at the service of the liturgy. It should not interrupt the flow of the ceremony. It is essential that all Confirmation candidates be familiar with the singing of the hymns and Mass responses. It is also recommended that the singing be backed up by the other children or adults. **Recommended hymns are at the back of the Confirmation booklet.**You are

free to choose other suitable hymns.

**3 Readings:**

The readings need to be readfrom the Lectionary.

**First Reading:** Romans (8:14-17) page 28 of the confirmation booklet.

**Responsorial Psalm** *(generally sung)*

**Second Reading:** Acts (2: 1-11)

**Gospel: (**Luke 4: 16-22) Jesus at Nazareth **[Lectionary Vol 3, page 104]**

**4 Laying on of Hands**

All candidates will individually receive the “Laying on of Hands.” This will be administered by the priests present. The laying on of hands is done in silence and needs to be organised in an orderly, dignified and prayerful manner.

**5 Prayer of the Faithful**

Some prayers need to be said by parents.

**6 Dressing the Altar**

Optional

**7 Procession of Gifts**

Presentation of the Bread and Wine.

**8 Gaeilge**

The inclusion of Irish in the ceremony is encouraged through the readings, hymns and a Prayer of the Faithful.

**9 Involvement of parents encouraged**

The involvement of parents is encouraged e.g. through a Reading, a Prayer of the Faithful, Communion Reflection and joining in the singing.

**10 Commentator**

A commentator should be used to explain the ceremony of Confirmation. This person could be a member of the Liturgy Group or Parish Pastoral Council. A short explanation of each part of the ceremony can be found in the Confirmation booklet. Each part should be commentated on as it occurs.

**11 The Sponsor**

It is very important to highlight the role of the sponsor. The sponsor needs to be confirmed and over sixteen years of age. Normally, it is the baptismal sponsor or a relative that takes on the role. It is important that the sponsor is seen as a person of faith, who in life acts as a faith role-model for the candidate being confirmed.

**12 Choosing a Confirmation Name**

The Confirmandi are required to choose the name of a saint for Confirmation. It is important that they know that the saint was a person close to God and was also a person of faith and prayer. They need to reflect on how they themselves can be people of faith and choose to strive to do so.

**13 Project on their Confirmation Name**

Each child is invited to write a brief account of the saint they have chosen as a Confirmation name. It may help if they approached the account as they would if writing about a grandparent e.g. the birthplace, a word about their childhood, their chosen career, their prayer and faith life, the qualities they admire the most in the person and how this person inspires then.

**14 The Pledge**

The young people are encouraged to take the pledge on Temperance Sunday, which is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

**N B.**  If the parish wish to include the pledge in the ceremony please mention it to the bishop well in advance.

**15** **Kerry Diocesan Mission** *(This is voluntary, of course)*

A confirmed Christian reaches out to others, especially the needy. This is an opportunity to discuss issues such as being fair and just, reaching out to the needy, caring for the world and its people. Candidates are invited to make a contribution to Children Helping Children -the Society of Missionary Children*.*  [**www.wmi.com**](http://www.wmi.com)Thanks to all the pupils who contributed so generously to *Children Helping Children* last year, which amounted to 1,172 euro from the diocese of Kerry. It is much appreciated.

**All monies for should be sent to:**

**The Mission Committee,**

C/o The Secretary,

John Paul 11 Pastoral Centre,

Rock Road,

Killarney.

**N.B. Cheques payable to: Kerry Diocesan Project Fund**

**IN THE CLASSROOM**

**What children need to learn:**

* Understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
* Connect Confirmation to the other two Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Eucharist.

* The story of Pentecost.
* The Holy Spirit at work in the lives of people they know and in the lives of the saints.
* The Gifts of the Spirit.
* The Fruits of the Spirit.
* Prayer to the Holy Spirit.
* Ways of living their confirmation commitment.
* Each pupil chooses the name of a saint that s/he admires and wish to imitate. Write a brief account of the saint.
* Know the hymns for the ceremony.
* Know the Mass responses.