



**COMPLETION OF  
SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION**  
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

**I. Basic background:**

A. Eucharist is the crowning point of the Sacraments of Initiation. Therefore, the normative sequence for completing Initiation for all having the use of reason is Confirmation – First Eucharist. The Diocese of Great Falls-Billings celebrates this restored order of sequence in all the parishes and missions.

B. For those baptized in infancy:

Confirmation and reception of First Communion will ordinarily occur at about the age of seven (age of discretion) at a parish celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. Since the bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, when Confirmation and First Eucharist take place at the same celebration, the bishop normally will preside.

Preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) must be completed prior to completing Initiation (see diocesan guidelines on Penance). The candidate normally will celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Confirmation and First Eucharist (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1310).

The celebration of Confirmation and the reception of First Eucharist takes place at a Eucharistic liturgy usually outside of the Lenten Season and ideally during the Easter Season. As far as possible, this celebration should take place at a regularly scheduled Sunday liturgy. The date and time of celebration is scheduled with the bishop's office.

C. Adult catechumens (seven years of age and older) must be fully initiated at the same time they receive Baptism. The presbyter who administers the baptism has the faculty by law to administer Confirmation (see #232 *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*).

D. Those who are being received into the church should, after suitable preparation, make their Profession of Faith and complete their Initiation in a common celebration. The presbyter who receives the profession of faith has the faculty by law to confirm (see #493 *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*).

E. The presider must receive delegation from the bishop to confirm adults who were baptized Catholic as infants and who have not completed the stages of the RCIA in preparation for Confirmation (see Diocesan Policy-“Faculties of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings,” September 1, 1994).



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**II. Canonical requirements:**

A. Sponsors:

**Canon 893§1**

*To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in canon 874.*

§2. *It is desirable to choose as sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.*

**Canon 874**

§ 1. *To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:*

*1° be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;*

*2° have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;*

*3° be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;*

*4° not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;*

*5° not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.*

§2. *A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness for baptism.*

Sponsors for the completion of Initiation should be available to the candidates to assist in on-going formation and faith sharing.

B. Records:

**Canon 895** – *The names of those confirmed with mention made of the minister, the parents and sponsors, and the place and date of the conferral of confirmation are to be recorded in the confirmation register of the diocesan curia or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a register kept in the parish archive. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation, so that a notation is made in the baptismal register according to the norm of can. 535§2.*

**Canon 896** – *If the pastor of the place was not present, the minister either personally or through another, is to inform him as soon as possible of the conferral of confirmation.*



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1. A baptismal certificate should be obtained for all those baptized outside the parish or mission where the sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist are to be received.
2. All names of those receiving the sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist must be recorded in the sacramental records. As stated above the following is recorded:
  - a) Name of the person receiving these sacraments
  - b) Minister of the sacrament(s)
  - c) Parents and sponsor
  - d) Place and date of Baptism
  - e) Place and date of Confirmation
  - f) Place and date of First Eucharist

### III. Catechetical guidelines:

A. Baptism is the gateway to all the sacraments. Only baptized persons are capable of completing the sacraments of initiation. Outside the danger of death, the person receiving Confirmation and Eucharist must have reached the age of discretion, be in the state of grace and properly instructed as to the rites and symbols of Initiation (Canons 889 and 891).

1. Immediate preparation for the sacraments properly includes conversion through liturgy, symbol, prayer, scripture and the experience of a community of worship and service. It takes place in a family context at a time separate from and outside of the religion classroom, and within the home parish of the candidate.
2. The sources of sacramental catechesis are the rites and symbols of the sacraments.

B. “Although Confirmation is sometimes called the ‘sacrament of Christian maturity’, we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth . . .” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1308). The newly initiated are expected to continue participation in faith formation and growth in their parish community throughout their lifetime. Development of faith is a life long process.

C. Because celebration of sacraments is a part of parish life, the preparation and celebration need to be done in a holistic manner. Children in Catholic schools receive the sacramental preparation in the parish so that both school and religious formation children are involved in the same process.

D Information on resources and methods of preparation are available in the Office of Youth Catechesis. The Diocese of Great Falls-Billings recommends that age-appropriate curriculum materials and texts be used in the catechetical formation of children preparing for completion of initiation. It is the policy of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings that only curriculum approved and listed on The



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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts is used in parish and school catechetical formation programs. This list is extensive and can be obtained by contacting the Diocesan Office of Youth Catechesis or the USCCB website:  
[www.usccb.org/catechism/document/currentlist.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/catechism/document/currentlist.pdf)

**IV. Liturgical guidelines:**

In preparation for the celebration it would be essential to consult the provisions of the *Rite of Confirmation*, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (part II)*, the *Directory for Masses with Children* (found in the front of the 1985 *Sacramentary*), and the introduction to the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*.

In keeping with the fact that the sacraments being received are a completion of the sacraments of initiation begun at Baptism:

The candidates need not take a new name; the saint name given at Baptism is sufficient. (However, if the baptismal name is not a saint's name, choosing a new name is desirable.) The custom of taking the name of a saint who models the Christian life is laudable.

The sponsor/godparent may be the same as in Baptism (Introduction to the Rite of Confirmation #5).

Since children have a short attention span, keep things simple and brief.

Periods of **shared silence** during the Mass are important.

The symbols, rituals and gestures incorporated in liturgy are beautiful expressions of our faith. It is important to treat them with love and respect. We are formed by what we see and do.

\*\*\*Participation of Children in the Celebration

1. The candidates' participation in this celebration principally involves their celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. These two actions and the symbols and rituals involved should be preeminent.
2. The candidates should not act out a reading or perform a song. Such activities can add to the candidates' nervousness, but more importantly overshadow the celebration of these two Sacraments of Initiation (see Introduction, *Children's Lectionary*, #52).
3. A representative group of the newly confirmed may present the gifts solely of bread and wine in the procession, each need not carry an item.



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### Setting up for the Liturgy

**Photographs:** Please inform people of our diocesan policy: Photos must never distract from the prayerfulness of the sacraments; no flash is to be used for the celebration.

**Candidates:** Anticipate the manner in which the Bishop will know the name of each candidate during the rite:

Option: each candidate wears a large name tag displaying the name by which he/she is to be confirmed.

Option: the sponsor hands the bishop a card with the confirmation name of the candidate.

**Vestments:** On Sundays, use the color of the day. On weekdays, use color of the Feast. If the mass for Confirmation is used, vestments may be white or red. Please indicate the color of vestments to be used when there is an option. The Bishop will bring his own vestments and oils. Please indicate the number of priests who will be concelebrating.

**Servers:** In addition to the regular complement of servers, there is need for two additional servers to attend to the bishop's miter and crosier.

**Environment:** It is desirable that the colors used for the environment harmonize with the vestments.

-Make sure everything is in place for the Sprinkling Rite. This rite reminds us of our Baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation. It replaces the penitential rite except during Lent when sprinkling is not used. It is expected that the Sprinkling Rite will be used throughout the Easter Season.

-Have a bowl of warm, soapy water for the bishop to clean his hands after the rite and a few slices of lemon. Set out a good towel as well. There is no need to put out cotton balls to wipe the oil from the forehead.

-Communion bread. Regardless of whether the parish uses wafers or substantial bread, make sure there is a sufficient quantity for the whole assembly. Use one or the other, there should not be a mixture. If substantial bread is used it must be made only of 100% wheat flour and water. (Please note: commercial flour such as Gold Meadow is a mixture which contains wheat and barley. The flour must be 100% wheat flour.) The tabernacle should never be approached during any celebration of Eucharist unless by accident the priest/minister runs out during the distribution of communion. This principle is especially important for the celebration of First Eucharist.

### Step-By-Step through the Liturgy

The bishop will meet with the candidates prayerfully and privately prior to the Liturgy. The candidates are to assemble for this purpose **30 minutes** before the ritual begins. Candidates should be able to tell the bishop what a sacrament is and more specifically explain what is being celebrated in the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. The bishop will briefly review the ritual with the candidates.



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Introductory Rites

The **Song of Gathering** may be seasonal in nature. It serves to gather the community and prepare them to hear the word of God.

The **Sprinkling Rite**

The **Gloria** is usually sung. It is not used during Advent or Lent.

Liturgy of the Word

The *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* and the *Introduction to the Lectionary for Children* have some guidelines for the readings:

1. Sunday: the readings of the day are taken from the Lectionary.
2. Feasts or Solemnities: use the texts of that Feast.
3. Weekdays: it is recommended that the readings be taken from the approved *Lectionary for Children, or Rite of Confirmation*. During privileged seasons, e.g., Easter Season, texts are of the day.  
Even though the Introduction to the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* (#22) suggests that the readings and General Intercessions may be proclaimed by older children, teenagers or adults, unless one reads well and audibly, it is preferable to have a regular trained lector.
4. On weekdays the second reading may be omitted.
5. The Gospel Acclamation is sung, never recited. It is recommended that it be sung during the procession of the Gospel Book to the ambo.
6. A priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel. They receive a blessing from the bishop before proclamation. Incense may be used, in which case it is brought to the Bishop before the blessing of the deacon/priest.
7. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the deacon (not a priest) brings the Book of the Gospels over to the bishop for him to reverence.

The Rite of Confirmation

1. After the proclamation of the Gospel all are seated. Before the homily, a catechist presents the candidates to the bishop (not to the assembly).

Sample: **Bishop \_\_\_\_\_, the candidates of the parish community of \_\_\_\_\_ have been properly prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Our faith community of \_\_\_\_\_ asks that you confer upon them the seal of the Holy Spirit, and welcome them to the table of the Eucharist.**

2. The name of each candidate is announced. Each stands when his/her name is called out.
3. The bishop will ask them to turn and face the assembly, who applaud their welcome. The bishop asks them to be seated.



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4. Homily
  5. Renewal of Baptismal Promises (Replaces the Nicene Creed).
  6. Invitation to Prayer (The Bishop invites all priests present to join him).
  7. Laying on of hands and prayer for the Holy Spirit.
  8. Anointing with Chrism. The candidates come forward in procession with their sponsors for the chrismation and physical laying on of hands.
  9. General Intercessions. The ritual provides a standard series of petitions as an example. However, it is preferable that you craft your own.
- Recommended Options:** Include a petition for good weather that will lead to a bountiful harvest. Include a petition for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Include a petition according to the pressing and present needs of the world.

### Preparation of the Gifts

The gifts are presented to the bishop by representatives of the community.

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Eucharistic Prayer: One of the *Eucharistic Prayers for Children* may be used.
2. The acclamations of these Eucharistic Prayers are to be sung by the entire assembly (see Directory of Masses with Children, #30).
3. Communion Rite

After the Sign of Peace, the bishop invites the candidates to approach the table of the Eucharist for the first time and reminds them “of the preeminence of the Eucharist, which is the climax of their initiation and the center of the whole Christian life” (RCIA #329).

### First Holy Communion:

4. Communion is to be distributed under both kinds, using hosts consecrated at that same Mass, not taken from the tabernacle, as a more complete sign of the meaning of the Eucharistic Celebration.
5. The focus given to First Communion should equal that of Confirmation. It is the completion of Initiation. The presider may wish to give a brief introduction, mentioning that the children are invited to the table for the first time and that they will now be fully initiated members of the church community. Parents may present their child for this sacrament.  
The logistics must be worked out ahead of time so that the communion procession is not disrupted or prolonged unduly. You may ask the extended family and the assembly to wait until all the candidates have received their First Communion, thus, only the parents would receive with the children.
6. The Communion Song begins immediately following the invitation to communion. Normally only one Communion Song accompanies the communion procession and may be interspersed with instrumental verses or sung *a capella* while musicians receive communion.



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Closing

Announcements – after the Prayer after communion.

**Music for Confirmation and First Eucharist**

1. Music is of great importance in all celebrations, but it is especially important in celebrations with children. Children love to sing and should be encouraged to participate fully in the music for this celebration.
2. In preparing the music for this celebration, it is essential that the following be considered:
  - a) the directives as outlined in the *Directory for Masses with Children* (found in the *Sacramentary*, 1985, in the *Introduction to the Children's Lectionary* and in *Sing to the Lord, Music in Divine Worship*) regarding singing and music;
  - b) the age and ability of the children present for the celebration (Are the children able to sing the music? Do they understand the text?);
  - c) the quality of the music (Is this good music or is it trite or too childish?);
  - d) the presence of the choir/instrumentalists (Does their presence encourage or discourage full participation? Are they supporting the singing or taking over?).

***Pastoral Statement on Photography during the Liturgy***, prepared by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, is to be observed.

**\*Remember to notify the place of Baptism that Confirmation has taken place for any one completing initiation who was not baptized in the parish.**

Revised & Promulgated  
By Bishop Michael W. Warfel  
January 2010



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**LITURGY PREPARATION FORM:**

In preparing to celebrate the completion of the Sacraments of Initiation with your parish community, the Bishop would find the following information helpful. Please fill in and return this form **at least thirty (30) days** before the event. Thank you.

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Directions are helpful.)

Date of Celebration: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidates for Confirmation: #\_\_\_ ages \_\_\_\_\_; for First Eucharist: #\_\_\_ ages \_\_\_\_\_

Meal or Reception: \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (time \_\_\_\_\_) Photo with Bishop (time \_\_\_\_\_)  
(preferably after the celebration)

*Please indicate where the Bishop is to park his vehicle. Please reserve a space for him.*

**Checklist:**

- \_\_\_ I have read and understood the accompanying instruction.
- \_\_\_ Candidates told to come early (Bishop meeting)
- \_\_\_ Chrim set-up \_\_\_ Sprinkling Rite set-up \_\_\_ Vestments & Environment set-up
- \_\_\_ Incense \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Candidate identification set-up \_\_\_\_\_ Warm water & towels set-up \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Ritual Presentation of Candidates arranged (Name: \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_ Readers have been identified and rehearsed
- \_\_\_ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion identified and prepared
- \_\_\_ Minister of Ceremonies \_\_\_\_\_ Cross Bearer \_\_\_ Acolyte \_\_\_ Thurifer
- \_\_\_ Pastor consultation \_\_\_\_\_ Musician consultation \_\_\_ Liturgist consultation
- \_\_\_ Miter Bearer \_\_\_\_\_ Crosier Bearer

**READINGS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MUSIC:**

Please identify Title & Author

Gathering Song: \_\_\_\_\_

Sprinkling Rite: \_\_\_\_\_

Gloria (omit Advent & Lent): \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Acclamation: \_\_\_\_\_

Music during Confirmation procession: \_\_\_\_\_

General Intercessions: \_\_\_ sung \_\_\_ not sung \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation of the Gifts: \_\_\_\_\_

Holy (Mass setting) \_\_\_\_\_



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Eucharistic Prayer for Children Acclamations (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
Memorial Acclamation (Mass setting): \_\_\_\_\_  
Doxology/Great Amen (Mass setting): \_\_\_\_\_  
Our Father: \_\_\_ sung as found in Sacramentary \_\_\_ spoken  
Lamb of God (Mass setting): \_\_\_\_\_  
Communion Song: \_\_\_\_\_  
Song of Sending: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any particular patterns/practices which the Bishop should know prior to the liturgy. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor or Pastoral Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

Mail or fax to:  
The Office of Worship & Christian Initiation  
PO Box 1399  
Great Falls, MT 59403

fax 1-406-454-3480  
1-800-332-9998 or 727-6683

Revised & Promulgated  
By Bishop Michael W. Warfel  
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