

Customary for Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Note: There may be pastoral reasons to make exceptions to the guidelines that follow. Please do not hesitate to discuss any such concerns with the bishop.

If possible, please have the group being confirmed/received or making reaffirmation meet with the bishop briefly for introductions and a prayer at least 30 minutes before the service. The bishop would enjoy the opportunity to meet each person and discuss their ministry in the church and in the world and welcomes speaking to the group in an adult forum or other similar setting.

Please be doubly sure to have rehearsed them in the parts of the service they are to speak, and remind them to bring their prayer books or service leaflets with them when they are presented. Their being able to participate is of the first importance.

The bishop will not second-guess you about whom you present for confirmation and whom for reception, as situations can become very complex. The age of sixteen or older should remain the norm, but there are always exceptions. As long as faith is professed and hands are imposed, it would seem that ritual sufficiency is reached.

The color for the service is that of the season, except that white or red may be worn on otherwise “green” days. Green remains a perfectly acceptable color. Please advise the bishop of your choice.

Please also advise the bishop as to which parts of the service are sung in your congregation.

Please be sure to print the text of the pontifical blessing (in the *Book of Common Prayer* p. 523, and *The Hymnal 1982* S-173) in the service bulletin, even if it is not to be sung.

Please use the propers of the day for all Sunday morning confirmations. Beginning in Advent 2007, these should be based on the RCL and not the BCP lectionary. On other occasions we will need to discuss the choice of lessons.

The deacon or priest reading the gospel should come to the bishop for a blessing before going to the place where the gospel is read. After “The Gospel of the Lord” and the people’s response, the gospel book should be brought to the bishop, open, for veneration.

Presentation and Examination of the Candidates

The bishop wishes to make eye contact with all the candidates during the examination and baptismal covenant, so they should be arranged in a semi-circle or other convenient group near the bishop’s chair. A chair for the bishop should be placed in the chancel or other similar area facing the congregation.

During the prayers for the candidates, unless the baptismal liturgy is being celebrated and the congregation is already on page 305 of the prayer book, do not announce the page number or indicate it in the leaflet, as a long pause to turn pages here just confuses people, and they must turn back. *It is simplest to say, “the response to the petitions is, ‘Lord, hear our prayer.’ ”* Then just start praying without indicating a page number in the service bulletin or by way of announcement. Please do use this litany, and *insert any local needs or concerns* in petitions of similar form, with the same response, at the end of the petitions for the candidates. The bishop will then conclude with the collect.

If you elect to use Eucharistic Prayer D, local petitions can be put there in the “remember” section, if you so desire. Please keep in mind that the “remember” sections in Prayer D are addressed to God, not the congregation, and should be written accordingly.

At the time for confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation, please bring the candidate to the bishop and pronounce his or her name distinctly. Even if candidates wear name cards, present them by name, because some names are not easy to pronounce without hearing them. If the candidates are to be received or are making a reaffirmation, indicate that as well. Candidates for all three rites kneel.

If the architecture permits the group to stay together, please do not send the candidates back to their seats. This enables the bishop to greet each one at the peace. After the peace, please make any necessary announcements [if you do not make the announcements at the end]; the bishop will then say the offertory sentence.

The deacon or priest who sets the table should put the chalice and paten side by side, not front and back, with the chalice on the left. The bishop is accustomed to use the lavabo.

BCP, p. 322: “It is appropriate that the other priests present stand with the celebrant at the Altar, and join in the consecration of the gifts. . . .” Thus, at the eucharist, priests in the parish should join the bishop. Reminder: lay persons should assist with the chalice only after all the clergy of the parish are fulfilling their servant ministry of feeding. The rector, vicar, or priest in charge *must* join the bishop in distributing Holy Communion.

At visitations, we use either Rite I or II *according to the use your parish follows*, from the offertory on. You may select the eucharistic prayer. Prayers A and B are preferred for these occasions.

If you select Prayer D, you or a deacon should read the “remember” intercessions in the places indicated. Vessels for the distribution should be made ready during the fraction anthem, before the invitation is said. Concelebrants will communicate themselves.

The benediction is ordinarily the episcopal blessing. In Lent the Prayers over the People from BOS is used.

The deacon or priest will say the dismissal.