

Preparation for Confirmation, Reception or other Reaffirmations of the Baptismal Covenant

This series of rites and steps prepares baptized Christians to reaffirm their Baptismal Covenant and receive the laying on of hands by the bishop in Confirmation, Reception, or other forms of Reaffirmation of Baptismal vows.

In some congregations, it may be desirable for candidates for baptism and the previously baptized to attend meetings together during each step. It is important to underscore the full Christian membership of the baptized.

There are three steps of preparation and formation, each concluding with a rite as a transition. Throughout, the candidate is valued by the community as a living example of our common task to reexamine and reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant, and as a model of conversion.

The steps and rites set forth below assume that the process of preparation culminates with the renewal of the baptismal covenant at the Great Vigil of Easter. If the Bishop cannot be present at the Vigil, the baptized are presented to the Bishop for the laying on of hands in Confirmation, Reception, or the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows at a later date, preferably during the Great Fifty Days.

Step One: Inquiry.

This is a period for sharing of stories from personal experience and the Biblical narrative, and for exploring the inherent connections. This step gives persons enough exposure to Christian faith and practice, and the life of the local community so they may determine if they wish to enter a

period of intentional formation. At the conclusion of this period, one or more sponsors are chosen from the local congregation.

First Rite:

Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation, Reception, or the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

Step Two: Exploration.

The second step is a longer period during which those being formed, along with sponsors, catechists, and other members of the community engage in deeper exploration of faith and ministry. It is based on a pattern of experience followed by reflection, in which baptized persons explore the meanings of baptism and the Baptismal Covenant in their lives. They may also discern the type of service to which God calls them in the world. The sponsors and catechists in turn support them in that service and help them to reflect theologically on their experience of ministry through the study of Scripture, in prayer, and in worship. This step may vary in length according to the needs of the candidate.

Candidates take part in the Eucharist, including the reception of Holy Communion, unless prevented by penitential discipline.

Second Rite:

Enrollment for Lenten Preparation (The First Sunday of Lent)

Step Three: Preparation.

This is a step of final preparation for Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant at the Easter Vigil. The candidates focus on the Lenten disciplines and their role in ministry. In their group meetings, candidates for reaffirmation share their ongoing experience of conversion—especially with those catechumens who are preparing for baptism—and explore more deeply the life of prayer and ministry.

Third Rite:

The baptized reaffirm their Baptismal Covenant at the Easter Vigil, and take part in Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows.

Step Four: Reflection.

It is appropriate for those who have renewed their baptismal promises to join those baptized at the same Vigil in the post-baptismal reflection (pages 125-126) presented to the Bishop for the laying on of hands in Confirmation, Reception, or the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, preferably during the Great Fifty Days.

Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

If there is an Admission of Catechumens that takes place in the year, the Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation, Reception, or the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows takes place on the same Sunday. After the catechumens are signed with the cross by the Presider and sponsors, the candidates for the solemn renewal of their baptismal promises (Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows) come forward with their sponsors. If there are no catechumens in the parish, then the rite takes place after the Creed at the principal Eucharist on a Sunday.

The senior warden or other representative of the community presents the candidates to the Presider with these or similar words:

N., we present to you N., N., who are baptized members of the Body of Christ as they undertake a process of preparation to renew their Baptismal Covenant.

Presider (to each candidate) What do you seek?

Answer Deeper life in Christ.

Presider In baptism, you died with Christ to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of his Body. Will you study the promises made at your baptism, and strive to keep them in the companionship of this community?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you attend the worship of God regularly with us, to hear the Word and celebrate the mystery of Christ's dying and rising?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider Will you join us in our life of service to those who are powerless and outcast, and work for justice and peace?

Answer I will, with God's help.

Presider (to the sponsors/companions/friends) You have been chosen by this community to serve as companions to these persons. Will you support them by prayer and example and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God?

Sponsors We will, with God's help.

Presider Let us now pray (for those preparing for baptism and) for the candidates for confirmation, reception, and the reaffirmation of baptismal vows.

The service continues with the prayers of people.

Rite of enrollment for Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

This rite is used at the principal service on the First Sunday of Lent, after the Enrollment of Candidates for baptism.

After the candidates for baptism have signed the book, the candidates for Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows come forward with their sponsors.

The senior warden or other representative of the congregation presents the baptized to the Presider with these or other words:

N., we present to you N., N., who have been growing in their understanding of our call as Christians and now desire to prepare more intentionally to renew their Baptismal Covenant.

Presider Have they studied the promises made at their baptism and striven to keep them in companionship with this community and the rest of the Church?

Sponsors They have.

Presider Have they attended worship regularly to hear God's word and to celebrate the mystery of Christ's dying and rising?

Sponsors They have.

Presider Have they participated in a life of service to those who are powerless and outcast, and work for justice and peace?

Sponsors They have.

Presider (to the candidates) Will you strive to set an example for us (and especially for those among us who are preparing for baptism) as a follower of Jesus?

Answer We will, with God's help.

Presider (to the sponsors) Will you accompany these candidates on the Way and help them to renew their commitment to Christ?

Sponsors We will, with God's help.

The candidates remain together at the front of the church while the Deacon, or other person appointed, leads the litany beginning on page 132.

After the petition,

“For N. and N., that they may remember this day, and remain for ever grateful for this blessing,
we pray to you, O Christ.

Guide us in your grace.”

Insert:

“For these *candidates for confirmation and the solemn renewal of baptismal promises*, that they may be sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, persevere in the knowledge of Christ's love, and rejoice in all God's works, let us pray to you, O Christ.

Guide us in your grace.”

Recognition of Ministries in the Church and the World

The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. Lay persons are commissioned for their ministry by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and no form of commissioning for special functions is necessary. The form that follows is intended for use when a public recognition of a special function is desired.

This form may be used following the homily (and Creed) at the Eucharist, or at the time of the hymn or anthem following the Collects in Morning or Evening Prayer, or separately.

Symbols appropriate to the ministry may be given to the candidates as they are recognized.

When the number of candidates for any office is large, it is sufficient to say the sentence of recognition once over the entire group, but it is desirable that each person be greeted individually (and be given an appropriate symbol).

The congregation being seated, the celebrant stands in full view of the people. The candidates stand facing the celebrant.

The Celebrant says these or similar words

Friends in Christ, we are all baptized by the one Spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good.

A representative of the congregation N. has been called to the ministry of

_____.

People Praise be to God, who has called you to this service.

The following, or some other Collect may be used.

Celebrant Let us pray. (Silence)

Look with favor upon those whom you have called, O God, and grant that they may be so filled with your Holy Spirit, that they may minister in their chosen task with joy and steadfast devotion; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

Celebrant

In the Name of God, we recognize you [N.] as _____ [and give you this _____ as a token of your ministry].

When used with the Eucharist, the service continues with the Prayers of the People and the exchange of the Peace. Those commissioned should be prayed for by name.

When used separately, it ends with the preceding prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the exchange of the Peace, and a blessing.

Scripture Readings

When used as a separate service, one of the following readings may be used at the discretion of the celebrant:

Deuteronomy 4:1-2,9 (Give heed to the statutes and ordinances which I teach you.)

1 Chronicles 9:26-30, 32 (Some of them had charge of the utensils of service.)

Nehemiah 8:1-4a,5-6,8 (Ezra reads the Law of Moses to the people.)

Romans 12:6-12 (Having gifts that differ according to the grace given.)

2 Corinthians 4:2,5-6 (Having this ministry by the mercy of God.)

Colossians 3:12-17 (Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.)

Hebrews 6:9-12 (God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and love.)

Matthew 5:14-16 (You are the light of the world.)

Mark 4:2-9 (A sower went forth to sow.)

Luke 12:35-37 (He will come and serve them.)

John 6:(1-7) 8-13 (There is a lad here who has five barley loaves.)