

Baptism and Confirmation for those Over the Age of Seven

In the Catholic Church, those seeking baptism and who have achieved the age of reason, which is determined to be the stroke of midnight on the morning of your seventh birthday, are canonically treated as adults, and as such, must also be Confirmed and receive their First Communion all in the same service.

All Sacraments require adequate preparation, however Confirmation in particular is intended to contain more significant training as it is more of an “adult” commitment to serve God in His Church.

For most of the Catholic Church in the United States, this is typically achieved through some form of the RCIA (which has since been re-named to OCIA) process, including classes that typically begin in the early fall (usually September), and conclude after Easter, with Confirmation typically taking place in the context of the Easter Vigil. Classes continue beyond the actual Confirmation so to allow the newly Baptized and/or Confirmed individuals to begin to live into their life in the Church. It should be noted that RCIA/OCIA is a process by which those seeking the sacraments are incorporated into the Church—it is not a curriculum. Pastors may choose at their discretion what curriculum or means of teaching to use. When the numbers are small, the Pastor may meet with them privately. When the numbers are larger, he may appoint other suitably trained individuals to help him prepare Catechumens (those seeking baptism) and Confirmandi (those seeking Confirmation) for their sacraments.

How this functions at St. Thomas Becket:

For Adults

The Adult Inquiry Class is our curriculum for teaching those in High School and above about the Catholic Church. This class runs twice per year. The first session begins in the fall (usually September) and concludes in December. The second term begins in January and concludes in the spring. It is sometimes the case that those seeking Baptism or Confirmation do so after the classes have already begun, and we have historically been quite flexible to allow others to join the course in-term, with the understanding that they will complete the missing classes either via make-up sessions, or by coming to those sessions in the following year. To learn about this program please contact the parish office to be put in touch with our DRE (Director of Religious Education).

For Children

In the Ordinariate, we have adopted the “Restored Order” of Sacramental Preparation. Roughly 100 year or so ago and prior, Confirmation and First Communion were offered at the same time to those around the age of 7. In the last few decades, a new phenomenon occurred where Confirmation was held until the teenage years with the premise being that young people could make more of an “adult decision” to live out their faith, and as such, most dioceses in the United States prepare children for Confirmation in their High School years. The exact age/grade differs from diocese to diocese. The Ordinariate, along with a few other Dioceses, have opted to follow the “Restored Order”, which simply means that we’re going back to the older model of offering Confirmation at an earlier age.

At St. Thomas Becket we offer Confirmation to children in the context of their First Communion and First Reconciliation Classes in the 2nd Grade, when they are over the age of 7, but usually closer to 8 by the time the training is complete.

For those seeking baptism as well, they would also complete the same small course for Baptism Preparation as those who are under the age of seven (see website for separate protocol), but would also have this added course of First Communion and Confirmation Preparation as well.

We offer several courses to complete this objective:

- **Sunday Mornings**—from 9:45-11:00am, we offer Religious Education for all grades, including a particular class for Sacraments in the 2nd Grade. As many people come to us from other dioceses which offer Confirmation in later grades, we also offer opportunities for children of all grades to achieve their sacraments. Please see the Director of Religious Education to determine which course would best suit the pedagogy (age-appropriate class) of your child. Within this program we are currently operating separate courses based on the age of the Confirmandi:
 - **2nd-4th Grade students** typically simply join the 2nd Grade class, as the teaching materials are age-appropriate to that range.
 - **5th-8th Grade students** are offered a one-semester course in Confirmation Preparation in the spring. As such, they break away from their normal grade-specific course at this time to be prepared for Confirmation.
 - **9th-12th Grade students** are simply directed to join the Adult Inquiry Class, as they have the maturity to take on the teaching of that course, and to be prepared with the other adults, many of whom are on the younger side as well.
- **Other Catholic Schools**—while we do recognize the sacramental preparation of those other Catholic Schools and institutions in our area, it should be noted that families seeking Confirmation **MUST** be members of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter. We cannot confirm those who belong to parishes of another Diocese. It may be the case that they will accept our training and allow your

children to be Confirmed there, but again, other Dioceses have different models of when the children are to be Confirmed.

Summary

For those children seeking baptism after the age of seven, the same course for those under the age of seven is implemented, with the added layer of First Communion and Confirmation Preparation.

For adults, the Adult Inquiry Class suffices as training for all of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion).