

Q&A

Frequently-asked questions about the restored order of the sacraments

By Deacon Bill Meagher



Q: What is the age for Confirmation in the Diocese of Salina?

A: Confirmation is received in the third grade, following two years of preparation beginning in second grade. First Reconciliation takes place in second grade. Then, in third grade, children receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion together—restoring the original order of the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Q: Are third graders old enough for Confirmation?

A: Yes. Canon Law (Can. 891) states that Confirmation is to be conferred “at about the age of discretion” (around age 7), unless the bishops set a different age. The Church teaches that Confirmation is not about “choosing to be an adult in the Church,” but about completing the grace of Baptism. Even infants can receive this sacrament

in cases where there is a danger of death. This is because Confirmation, like Baptism, is a gift of grace from God, and the Church desires that no one, especially the youngest members, die without receiving the graces associated with this sacrament. Confirmation and First Eucharist complete one's initiation into the Church and are the beginning of full participation in the life of Christ and His mission through the Church.

Q: What is the Sacrament of Confirmation, and what does it do spiritually?

A: Confirmation strengthens the baptized with the Holy Spirit, obliging them more firmly to live as witnesses of Christ. It imprints a spiritual character on the soul, deepens one's baptismal grace, and binds the person more closely to the Church (CCC 1302–1305, Can. 879). It is not a symbol of graduation, but a sacrament of initiation that empowers the Christian for lifelong mission.

Q: What do children need to know to be confirmed?

A: Canon Law requires that candidates be “suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew their baptismal promises” (Can. 889 §2).

Children need to know the basics of the Catholic faith, appropriate to their age, and have a desire to receive the sacrament. They must be baptized and not prevented by law from being confirmed. Importantly, they do not need to have a complete or mature understanding of the faith. Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation that strengthens baptismal grace and prepares one more fully for the Eucharist.

Q: What does Canon Law say about the order of sacraments?

A: Canon 842 §2 teaches that Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are all required for full initiation. Canon 866 adds that adults should be baptized, confirmed, and receive the Eucharist in that order. The Eucharist, described in Can. 897 as “the most august sacrament,” is the culmination of initiation—the

summit and source of Christian life. Restoring this original order emphasizes that the Eucharist is the goal toward which the other sacraments are directed.

Q: What if a child missed Confirmation in third grade and is already baptized?

A: The child should be brought to the pastor or parish catechetical leader to arrange age-appropriate preparation and to receive the sacrament at a later date.

Q: How are adults and older children who are unbaptized prepared?

A: Adults and children age seven and older who have not been baptized are prepared for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist together through the Rites of Christian Initiation (OCIA or OCIC).

Q: What would you say to someone who thinks we need to keep Confirmation at the current ages to keep young people attending religious education?

A: It's a fair and heartfelt concern—many parents and parish leaders worry that moving Confirmation earlier might lead to less teen involvement in religious education. But this raises deeper questions:

Should Confirmation—a free, unearned gift of grace—be used as a reward for staying in a program? Should fear of missing out on a sacrament be what keeps young people connected to the Church?

Confirmation isn't a graduation or something to earn. It's a strengthening by the Holy Spirit, building on Baptism and preparing us to fully receive the Eucharist. Why delay this gift, especially when young people most need the Spirit's guidance and strength?

Restoring the original order of the sacraments reaffirms that grace is not a prize, but a generous gift from God. It doesn't mean formation ends after third grade. Instead, it challenges us to walk with young people in new ways—through deeper formation, service, community, and discipleship.

We must never forget that Confirmation is not the finish line. It's a beginning.



TRANSITION PLAN

RESTORED ORDER OF THE SACRAMENTS

AUGUST 2025

Bishop releases a letter announcing the move to the Restored Order of the Sacraments.

2026-2027

Parishes confirm a significant portion of remaining students (at least half) and begin preparations for their first class receiving sacraments in the restored order.

2028-2029

The first group of 3rd graders will receive the sacraments following the restored order.

2025-2026

The year is focused on education and preparation as our parishes, parents, and teachers learning about the upcoming transition while regular operations continue.

2027-2028

This will be the most challenging year — the first restored order class begins prep, alongside the final confirmations for remaining grades.

2029-FUTURE

Transition Complete