

Form to Send – FAQs for Leaders

Below are select FAQs to assist ministry leaders. More will be added. Please send us your questions at oed@archatl.com!

Regarding the lower age for Confirmation: Why sixth grade (11-12 years old) as opposed to eighth grade or another?

The bishops chose 6th grade (11-12 years old) for a number of reasons.

- (1) First, young people need the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation and all the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
- (2) Second, middle schoolers today are often exposed to various challenges and to everything the world offers. A common age of disaffiliation occurs during the middle-school years. Receiving the grace of Confirmation and being formed in living it out at a younger age are vital.
- (3) Third, Confirmation has often been viewed as a “sacramental graduation.” We want to avoid that, and sixth grade more strongly communicates against a graduation mentality than eighth grade, for instance.
- (4) Fourth, with the priority of creating a culture of family faith formation and re-envisioning youth ministry apart from sacramental preparation, sixth grade is a more ideal age, building from the renewed emphasis on the family and then pivoting to a renewed youth ministry context.

All that said, it is important to keep in mind: The decision to move down to sixth grade is a decision of prudence. Canon law indicates the “age of discretion,” and Confirmation theologically is the second sacrament of Christian initiation. The question of “restored order” remains a question deserving further attention by the Church and by her episcopal conferences. In the context of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, more important than the change of age is the emphasis on creating a culture of family faith formation, reenvisioning youth ministry, and creating a family-oriented approach to Confirmation prep.

Are all parishes required to move away from a traditional, classroom approach to faith formation?

The Archdiocese of Atlanta is moving away from a catechetical approach dominated by a classroom model organized solely around children. All pastors and parish leaders are encouraged to discern their next steps toward engaging parents/families and what that should look like at their parish. For some, it may be taking other steps

to create a culture of family faith formation and engaging parents while retaining a traditional model *for a time*. Or, it may be a more robust engagement of children and parents separately. That said, either way the more “traditional-looking” classroom approach will need review and adjustment to orient more intentionally around the [four pillars of a culture of family formation](#) and around the life of the domestic church both inside and outside of the parish formation session.

Are new sacramental guidelines coming? What about retreats, service hours, and other “requirements”?

Yes, updated sacramental guidelines around Confirmation prep will be coming and are in process. The required two-year prerequisite foundational or ordinary faith formation will still remain, as distinct from the specific program for Confirmation preparation, which should be of briefer duration. The hope is that young people and parents will be involved in the parish family catechesis program for a number of years, but the two-year prerequisite allows for at least a minimum amount of time for more intentional engagement of the family. With regard to retreats and service hours, these were never requirements at the archdiocesan level and will remain the decision of parishes. The archdiocese encourages retreat and service experiences as powerful ways to encounter the Lord and carry out His mission. For younger ages, it will be important to discern how families can be more involved in some of the retreat and service experiences. Lastly, updated considerations regarding topics to be treated in the formation process will be shared.

What about different cultural expectations and needs?

OED is working closely with the Office of Intercultural Ministries to learn more about various needs and to collaborate on forming leaders. There will be various ways to adapt to the needs of your community while taking next steps forward, and it will not look the same for everybody. We look forward to learning more from each of our parishes as we advance together.

What is meant by “family catechesis” or “family faith formation”?

By family catechesis or family faith formation, we do NOT mean that the parish hands textbooks to parents and asks them to form their children at home. Rather, by family catechesis we mean parishes supporting and equipping parents in their role as the primary evangelist and catechist of their children by the parish accompanying—walking alongside with—parents and families with the help of catechists. The parish still plays a needed role, and parents should not feel overburdened or ill-equipped. Various models of family faith formation exist,

whether groups of families meeting together at the parish followed by at-home mission activities or children and parents meeting separately at the parish with intentional, overlapping formation.

What happens to youth ministry?

Moving Confirmation to 6th grade (11-12 years old) is a great opportunity to unleash the power of youth ministry (both middle school and high school) for evangelizing, forming, and supporting young disciples of the Lord Jesus. The archdiocese has a beautiful and vibrant culture of youth ministry, upon which we want to continue to build. This is not the time to step away from youth ministry—rather, this is the time to pray for and envision a renewed chapter of youth evangelization and discipleship in this local Church! The fruitfulness of *Form to Send* depends on many things, including our young disciples and thriving youth ministries that support them and their families. **Save the date for a *Form to Send* workshop on Confirmation and Youth Ministry (featuring Randy Raus) on September 15, 2026, at the chancery, and for a conference on advancing youth discipleship and intergenerational church renewal entitled [Every Generation Tour](#) on October 29, 2026, at St. Peter Chanel.

What about adult faith formation?

A key goal of *Form to Send* is reorienting our faith formation efforts from sacramental preparation alone to lifelong missionary discipleship. This includes reorienting catechesis around the axis of adult discipleship—an evangelizing, catechumenal vision for catechesis. The *Directory for Catechesis* makes clear, quoting the previous general directory, that “catechesis for adults ... must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it. This implies that the catechesis of other age groups should have it for a point of reference” (no. 77). Family faith formation is a key step in reorienting catechesis around adults with their children. For parishes, this is a great opportunity and invitation for colleagues in catechetical ministry (whether with children and youth, youth ministry, young adults, marriage and family ministry, adult faith formation, and senior adults) to pray and work together towards this renewed vision. This may mean new forms of collaboration, especially as traditional forms of catechesis with children and youth only move to integrate adults—parents/guardians, grandparents, and so forth.

Should preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation take place in the parish catechetical program or in the parish school?

Specific sacramental prep expectations at the parish remain the pastor's discretion. Catholic schools are prepared to offer both ordinary, ongoing formation as well as specific sacramental prep with regard to content. Pastors are encouraged to accept the intellectual and catechetical formation offered by the Catholic school, not requiring additional *ordinary* formation at the parish. Aspects of *specific, sacramental* preparation that can unite Catholic school students, public school students, homeschool students, and their families are encouraged, such as retreats, other prayer experiences, service opportunities, etc.

Where should preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation take place for children who attend regional Catholic schools?

The answer is similar to the above, especially where regional schools have a close relationship to a particular parish or parishes. Specific sacramental prep expectations at the parish remain the pastor's discretion.

Where will reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation take place for children who attend Catholic schools?

Sacramental reception will remain at the parish. Parochial school students registered at a different parish will need permission from their pastor if they wish to receive the sacrament with their class at the school's parish. (The same applies for students at Catholic regional schools with a parish on or near the campus.)

Which Catholic publishers provide Sacrament of Confirmation materials for grade 6?

Below are select resources. More will be added as available. Also, keep in mind that other established programs for older teens may be adaptable for younger ages (e.g., Life Teen's Purpose).

- Life Teen: [*Purpose*](#). Life Teen's Confirmation program *Purpose* – designed with an impactful curriculum for a digital age with various supplemental resources – has been used extensively for high school Confirmation prep locally but is adaptable for middle schoolers as well.
- Pathways: [*Zeal*](#). "Make a way with Zeal, a Confirmation family experience designed for middle childhood (6-10) and pre-adolescence (11-13) aged children. Led by their parents, children will grow in relationship with the Holy Spirit and a life of discipleship, through a variety of hands-on activities and meaningful conversations. Watch families dive deeper into the incredible gift God gives us of Confirmation, with Zeal. Can be used in restored order programs."

- Augustine Institute: [*Signs of Grace: You Are Sent*](#) (English & Spanish). This program is for children and could be appropriate for Grade 6. Includes parent sessions by Dr. Brandt Pitre. There are also programs for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist and the videos are available at formed.org. The Confirmation videos (5 total) are well done and directed towards younger kids.
- Augustine Institute's FORMED: *Real + True* (English & Spanish) teaches the Catechism of the Catholic Church. [Unit 16 "Confirmation"](#) provides four videos and a lesson PDF.
- Sophia Press: [*Sealed in Fire Confirmation Preparation*](#) for grades 5-8, seven sessions
- Pastoral Center Confirmation Preparation in a family format – coming 2027.
- St. Mary's Press: [*Anointed in the Spirit*](#) offers separate programs for middle and high school (English & Spanish).
- OSV: [*Encounter with Christ – Adolescent Confirmation*](#) is a four-session, family-based model available in both English & Spanish.
- Corazon Puro: [*R.E.A.L. Formation*](#). "R.E.A.L. Formation is a gamified, inculturated and interactive Confirmation program developed by Father Agustino Torres, CFR with the collaboration of many experts! Our goal is to Reawaken and Educate Authentic Leaders. This Confirmation program bridges the gap between volunteer catechists and a growing, underserved Hispanic youth who feel increasingly difficult to reach. It's an introductory program to form parish leaders, the young people as they are walking with from Confirmation to early adulthood, and their families. This is a two-year Confirmation Program that includes vibrant books, engaging videos and an app that will make faith relatable to this new generation. R.E.A.L. Formation will be available in English and Spanish." (From: [REALFormation | Corazon Puro](#))
- YDisciple: [*Confirmation Toolkit*](#). This is a free program from YDisciple and Alpha Youth with leader guides for middle school.