

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



FORM TO SEND
CREATING A PATH FOR
MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

A New Vision for Confirmation

*Renewing the Domestic Church & Inspiring
Young Disciples to Evangelize*

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP
CREATING A PATH FOR
FORM TO SEND



Plan for Today

- Brief Overview of *Form to Send*
 - Family Catechesis
 - Youth Ministry
 - Confirmation formation
 - Role of Catholic Schools
- Pastor perspectives
- Questions / discussion

There is a pressing need to frame everything in terms of evangelization, as the fundamental principle that guides ecclesial activity as a whole.

—*Directory for Catechesis* [DC] (2020), no. 297

We can't deny that we've needed a dramatic paradigm shift with how we equip the Domestic Church to pass along the faith to the next generation. There's no better time than now.

—Dan Cellucci, Catholic Leadership Institute, December 2020

A New Approach to Faith Formation and Confirmation

- **GOAL: lifelong missionary discipleship**
- **First focus:** overall approach to **faith formation** ... *reorienting around engaging families and adult discipleship* ... and re-envisioning **youth ministry**
- **Second focus:** to shift the ordinary grade level/age of Confirmation for baptized Catholics in the Archdiocese of Atlanta from 10th grade (15-16 years old) to **6th grade (11-12 years old)**





Resources Available

- [Working Document for Leaders](#)
- [Memo](#) from Archbishop Hartmayer to Leaders (Feb. 2026)
- [FAQs for Leaders](#)
- Family Faith Formation Day slides on [Creating a Culture of Family Faith Formation](#) and [The Sacrament of Confirmation](#)
- PCL Calls on Form to Send Working Document: [Part 1 on March 10](#); [Part 2 on April 14](#) (Part 3 on May 12)



Resources Coming Soon

- Videos from the Archbishop/Fr. Gerardo
- Revised Webpage(s) archatl.com
- Updated plans re: scheduling for celebration of Confirmation (*by early June*)
- Updated sacramental guidelines for Confirmation (*by later summer*)
- Save the dates:
 - Catechist Formation Days: August 22 & 29
 - Workshop on Confirmation & Youth Ministry: September 15
 - Every Generation Tour: October 29 at SPChanel



Planning Steps & Objectives

- ***ALWAYS – Pray & Discern***
- **FIRST – Develop a Culture of Family Faith Formation**
- **SECOND – Re-envision Your Parish Youth Ministry**
- **THIRD – Family-oriented Confirmation Program**
- ***HORIZON – Review, Evaluate, and Chart a Discipleship Path***



Planning Steps & Objectives

- ***ALWAYS – Pray & Discern:*** Restore the initiative to God. Review this vision and plan with your parish/school leadership and pray about where you are as a community, where the Lord is calling you to focus, and how you should plan your efforts to prepare for these changes. Continue to pray and discern as a team and community, asking the Holy Spirit for direction at every step.



Planning Steps & Objectives

- **FIRST – Develop a Culture of Family Faith Formation:** Establish a family-focused approach to catechesis as a way to begin reorienting efforts around ongoing family and adult discipleship formation.
Recommended 1-3 years before adjusting the grade level/age of Confirmation. This will and should look different at various parishes based on needs, circumstances, and capacity.



Planning Steps & Objectives

- **SECOND – Re-envision Your Parish Youth**

Ministry: Create a plan for how your parish will advance and invest in youth discipleship, engaging and mentoring young people through middle school into high school and preparing them to be sent. *Continued engagement with families will and should look different, but it's important to see what touchpoints can be continued with families, and especially parents, as youth enter middle-school and high-school years, pre- and post-Confirmation.*



Planning Steps & Objectives

- **THIRD – Family-oriented Confirmation**

Program: Make plans to implement a family-oriented sacramental program for Confirmandi and their families. *This will and should look different across parishes, but a key question will be how to engage parents (and sponsors) in meaningful and fruitful ways along the journey to Confirmation, continuing the momentum of the earlier family catechesis while also supporting the growing maturity of the adolescents.*



Planning Steps & Objectives

- ***HORIZON – Review, Evaluate, and Chart a Discipleship Path:*** Continue to submit efforts to the Lord, strengthening what is bearing fruit and adjusting what needs to be changed. Look at your overall parish culture and ask: *Are we oriented more towards programs per se or does what we do fit into and encourage a path for missionary discipleship?*



Timeline – Gradual

- **PHASE 1 – Preliminary Years (2026-2027):** Prayer, Discernment, Planning, Preparation, and Initial Implementation
- **PHASE 2 – Implementation Years (2028-2031):** All parishes are moving forward with some form of intentional family faith formation or engagement of parents and have begun the transition to a lower grade level/age for Confirmation after working through the planning steps. By 2031, all parishes should be implementing the new vision.



Family Catechesis

- **What it does NOT mean**

- Handing a textbook to parents to teach their children (with minimal or no parish involvement)
- The parish handing over catechetical ministry to parents

- **What it DOES mean**

- Parishes helping parents—equipping and empowering them—in their role as the primary, evangelizing catechists of their children
- Parishes working with and strengthening families as domestic churches



Family Catechesis

- **Variety of models and approaches**
 - Small groups of families meeting together with catechists at the parish, with at-home mission activities
 - Meeting with parents and children separately: Regular support and formation offered to parents as children meet at the parish
 - Hybrid models or combinations of approaches
 - Finding ways to engage parents and families with intentionality
 - Liturgical seasons
 - Sacramental prep
 - Retreats
 - Prayer experiences
 - Supporting and modeling pillars of domestic church life



Family Catechesis

- **Various resources and programs**, reflecting various models and approaches



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION



FAMILY *formation*



The Pastoral Center

Pastoral ministers helping pastoral ministers



Growing Up Catholic
FAMILY CATECHESIS



The Peyton Institute
for Domestic Church Life

HOLY CROSS
FAMILY MINISTRIES





Family Catechesis – Creating a Culture

- **Pillars of Domestic Church Life**

- ***Pray Together:*** Pray together and live the liturgical life of the Church both at the church and within their homes.
 - ***Listen, Learn & Talk Together:*** Learn more about God and have caring conversations with one another.
 - ***Work & Serve Together:*** Serve together as a family both in their homes and in the world.
 - ***Play Together:*** Gather for wholesome recreation and fun that nurture the parish as a family of families.
- *Consider how the parish can provide opportunities for families to exercise these pillars and bring them home*



Youth Ministry

- Ever more important: How to support an evangelizing, “growth-in-discipleship” path for youth? How to invite and call young people to be disciples and leaders?
- **Pray and discern**
- Aspects to consider:
 - Importance of both **middle school** and **high school**
 - Large groups & small discipleship groups
 - Deepening the encounter with Christ
 - Family engagement
 - The call to serve (and lead)
 - Parish involvement
 - Thinking beyond only “youth group”
 - Mission-oriented

Sept 1 – Confirmation and Youth Ministry Workshop with Randy Raus at chancery

Oct 29 – Every Generation Tour at SPC



Confirmation Prep

- List of Initial Resources
- Updating Sacramental Guidelines
 - At least two years of ordinary, ongoing formation
 - Confirmation prep: briefer duration; retreats and service recommended, within an age-appropriate and family-focused context
 - Updating curriculum emphases



Confirmation: Theological Considerations (see X. DeBroeck)

- **A sacrament of initiation**
 - *Unity of the sacraments of initiation*
- **Completes baptismal grace, not initiation**
 - *Oriented to the Eucharist*
- **A seal with the Gift of the Holy Spirit**
 - *Rediscovering the charisms & Pentecost*
- **Not a sacrament of maturity (as generally understood)**
 - *A sacrament of the Holy Spirit and missionary discipleship*



Confirmation: Family-Oriented Approaches

- **How to *involve/engage/support* parents ...** E.g., how can parents be formed and strengthened in a lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit? How can parents help their children recognize not only natural talents/strengths but also the gifts and charisms of the Holy Spirit? How can the family be invited into a deeper life in the Holy Spirit?
 - *Related note:* **How to involve/engage sponsors as well ...**
- **Various models and opportunities:** Family-oriented sessions; engaging parents separately but in a reinforcing way; retreats with parents and youth; service opportunities including parents



Confirmation: Family-Oriented Approaches (*cont.*)

- FFD – Three supplemental sessions in development
- Video message from Archbishop to parents being finalized
- Other publishers/resources will be made available (see FAQs)
- ***Where to start?*** Begin by praying and discerning with the four pillars of Domestic Church life to create a culture of family faith formation.



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION



Catholic Schools

- Offer both ordinary, ongoing formation and specific sacramental prep re: content
- Pastor's discretion: specific sacramental prep expectations at the parish—parishes will be encouraged to accept the intellectual and catechetical formation offered by the Catholic school
- Sacramental reception will remain at the parish (parochial school students registered at another parish will need pastor's permission)
- Engaging parents/families in creative ways encouraged
- Curriculum emphases—under review by OED

RESTORE THE INITIATIVE TO GOD





Thank you

- We welcome feedback
- OED team is available to come your way
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OFFICE OF
EVANGELIZATION
& **DISCIPLESHIP**

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA