

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a joyful service in which the candidates make their own promises to follow Christ and become an adult member of the church. It is a natural step on from, and is connected to, the sacrament of Baptism.

Where does it come from?

In the Bible we read that the apostles and other church leaders laid their hands on a Christian's head and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. You can read about this in The Bible, Acts chapter 9 verses 14 - 23 and chapter 19 verses 1 - 6.

The sacrament of Confirmation was always given immediately after the sacrament of Baptism. Today many churches still practice 'the laying on of hands' as a confirmation of faith. For those who were baptised as children this *confirmation* now takes place when they are old enough to make the promises for themselves. In Anglican and Catholic Churches this happens in the Confirmation service, when the bishop lays his hands on the heads of the 'confirmation candidates'.



What is involved?

Before people are confirmed they will usually go to a confirmation group. Here they will learn about the important beliefs of Christians and have an opportunity to discuss issues of faith and life with others.

A celebration and confirmation of faith...

This is an important time for a young Christian to learn about the commitment that being a Christian involves. They may have been baptised as a baby but in the confirmation service they will make their own promises before God about choosing to live as a Christian. (Anyone who has not already been baptised will be baptised as part of the Confirmation service).

Confirmation candidates may come from several churches in the area. Their family and friends will join with them to support them and to celebrate this special day.

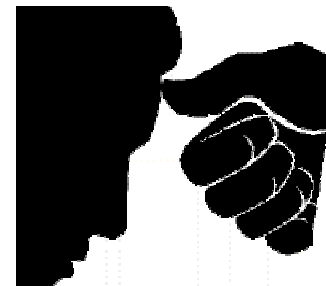
During the service itself...

The Bishop talks about how the Holy Spirit helps Christians to understand what God wants and how the Spirit encourages and guides us in this. Some of the people being confirmed may talk about why they believe in Jesus and want to be confirmed. This is called a 'testimony'.

The Bishop asks the people being confirmed if they have been baptised. He asks them if they believe in Jesus and that they will try to live the way He wants.

Each person comes to the front in turn and kneels down. The Bishop says, 'God has called you by name and made you his own.'

The Bishop puts his hand on their head. He says, 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.' They say 'Amen.'



The Bishop then draws the sign of the cross on the forehead of the candidate with the oil of chrism. This is an ancient sign of being chosen by God. Oil is also used at baptism – it is used as a symbol of strength and preparation for the Christian life.

The sign of the cross shows that the candidate is a child of God.

Why is Confirmation a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'. In the sacrament of Baptism the outward sign is water and the grace received is that of being made a member of Christ through his death and resurrection. In Confirmation the outward sign is the laying on of hands and the oil of chrism. These are signs of the grace given at Confirmation – the anointing, strengthening and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

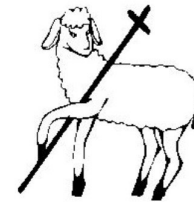
The Age of confirmation

Anyone may be confirmed who is old enough to answer responsibly for themselves, and who has taken part in a course of preparation.

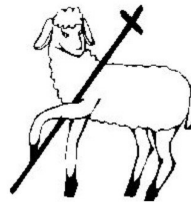
In the Church of England it has been traditional for people to be confirmed in their early teens, but there is no set age for confirmation; and many people are now being confirmed as adults as they discover for themselves the freedom and joy that faith in Christ brings.

The contents of this leaflet is based on the text of the Request website:
www.request.org.uk

Defend, O Lord,
your servants with your heavenly grace,
that they may continue yours for ever,
and daily increase
in your Holy Spirit more and more
until they come to
your everlasting kingdom. Amen.



ST AGNES
LONGSIGHT



ST AGNES
LONGSIGHT

For more information about being confirmed
or about the Christian faith, or to contact us
please visit our website

www.stagneslongsight.org

Being Confirmed
Questions about the Sacrament of Confirmation