

Restored Order Background

There is a great deal of variation from diocese to diocese for the age of confirmation in the United States. The Sacrament of Confirmation can be celebrated at any time between the age of discretion and sixteen years. It has been determined that a single catechesis cannot be assigned for this sacrament.

See National Directory for Catechesis, 36 A, 2.



In the early Church, Christian Initiation was one event. Adults or children were baptized, anointed, or had hands laid upon them, and then participated in the Eucharist, all at the same celebration. For a variety of reasons this practice gradually became separated into three different events. In 1910, Pius X recommended in his encyclical *Quam Singulari* that the First Communion of children should not be deferred too long after they had reached the age of reason. Previous to his urging, children who had been baptized as infants usually celebrated First Communion in the early teen years, and Confirmation usually was celebrated at an earlier age. However, once children began to participate fully in the Eucharist at an earlier age, the age for Confirmation was varied and not necessarily tied to reception of First Communion.

The Second Vatican Council called for the restoration of the Catechumenate and the revision of all the sacramental rituals. When the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which also includes children of catechetical age, was issued, it restored the order of the Sacraments of Initiation.

As a result, many dioceses and parishes throughout the United States have adopted the practice of celebrating Confirmation prior to First Communion. This is often referred to as *Restored Order*.

Some of these dioceses celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation at the same Eucharistic celebration in which children celebrate their First Communion.

Other dioceses celebrate at a different time, but before First Communion.

Other dioceses choose to celebrate Confirmation sometime after First Communion. All of these practices are approved by the United States Bishops Conference, which has given approval to the celebration of Confirmation for children baptized as infants anytime between the ages of seven and sixteen.

Call to Celebrate: Eucharist includes two sessions for those parishes that

are practicing restored order. These sessions are found on pages CE23–44 of the *Catechist Edition*. If you are preparing children for both sacraments, use these sessions after session one. For *Family Guide* pages for the two additional lessons for Restored Order, visit www.osvcurriculum.com.

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For Reflection

- What are the positive implications for Restored Order of Confirmation?