

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION SERVICES

GENERAL NOTES FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN PREPARATION

In response to requests from parish clergy responsible for preparing orders of service for Confirmations, the Bishops have authorised a set of service outlines which can be easily adapted for local use. The diocesan website now offers four templates:

- Baptism & Confirmation within Holy Communion
- Baptism & Confirmation outside of Holy Communion
- Confirmation outside of Holy Communion
- Baptism within Holy Communion

The first order includes provision for the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith and Reception into the Church of England.

Those working from the outline services should note the following:

- Please consult the Bishop before deciding finally upon readings. A useful table of readings for Confirmation services can be found at this link <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/downloads/rtf> . On major festivals it is appropriate to use the readings for the day.
- If the service is to take place in the context of the Eucharist, it is easiest for the Bishop and for the congregation if the full order of service is contained within one booklet. The complete text of the Eucharistic Prayer should be included.
- Some items in the service are optional e.g. the lighting of a large candle at the Decision; the sprinkling of confirmation candidates with water from the font; and the inclusion of a Commission. If these are to be included, the order of service should contain a clear rubric in a definite form.
- Testimonies by the candidates may be offered immediately after the Presentation. These should be brief, and preferably not more than four in number.
- Thought should be given to logistics e.g. assistants with tapers to light candles. It takes much longer to distribute lighted candles than the instruction in the service suggests.
- The Bishops are always pleased to anoint candidates for baptism and confirmation. Please let the Bishop know in advance if there is to be anointing. Should the hosting parish not have a supply of oils, the Bishop will bring an oil stock. The appropriate position for pre-baptismal anointing is at the Signing with the Cross before the Baptism takes place. This requires the Oil of Catechumens. Anointing after Baptism (and at confirmation) takes place immediately after the act of Baptism or Confirmation. This requires the Oil of Chrism. Please have a clean purificator available for the Bishop to wipe his hands if oil is to be used.
- If the Bishop has asked for a chaplain, please ensure that someone is available to take this role confidently.
- A thorough rehearsal is an essential tool for reassuring the candidates and familiarising them with the service, particularly those parts of it which require them to move from one part of the church to another.

Please let the confirming Bishop have a draft order of service well before final printing takes place, so that all parties have a clear picture of the running order.