

## What age?

You can be confirmed at any age over 7. Relatives of those at this age must be able to show that there will be continuing Christian nurture and instruction at home.

## How do we prepare?

It takes time to prepare for confirmation. There is usually a group for confirmation candidates which meets some weeks before the confirmation and for a month or two afterwards. The content of the confirmation group is related to age and background (there are usually separate groups for young people and for adults). Confirmation instruction includes discussion of the nature and effect of the Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Sacrament of the Sick, Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Holy Orders). The Bible, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Commandments are explained. There is also information about the Spiritual Life (including help to pray) and an understanding of the Eucharist/Holy Communion.

## Why does the Bishop come?



Bishop John of Fulham comes to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation because in the earliest Christian days the bishop baptised people (they were confirmed at the same time – regardless of their age).

Although baptism and confirmation are now separate, it is the Bishop who is still the minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

## What happens at Confirmation?

Candidates make their baptismal promises again. Then the Bishop extends his hands towards them as he prays for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. He also lays his hand on the head of each candidate, saying "confirm, O Lord, your servant Mary/John with your Holy Spirit". He then makes the sign of the cross with the oil of Chrism on the head of each candidate to show they belong to Christ forever.

## Christian living

A person who wants to be confirmed has to have made the decision that they want to live a serious Christian life - attending mass in Church regularly on Sundays and to live a life where prayer and witness have a part.

## Adult Baptism

Everything in this leaflet about confirmation applies to adult baptism (which is usually followed by confirmation).

If you would like to know more contact:

Fr Paul Williamson  
The Rectory, 7 Blakewood Close,  
Hanworth. TW13 7NL

☎(020) 8844 0457

email: [rector@s-george.org.uk](mailto:rector@s-george.org.uk)

or visit: [www.s-george.org.uk](http://www.s-george.org.uk)

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# Saint George Hanworth Park

## THINKING ABOUT CONFIRMATION?



This leaflet may help you

## Are you thinking about confirmation?

During the life of Jesus and after his death and resurrection, his followers grew to know and love him. They began to see in his teaching an answer to questions and problems they encountered in their lives. Once they had witnessed his resurrection, they became completely convinced that they wanted to remain his followers for the rest of their lives. Just before his ascension, Jesus told them to spread the message of the Good News he had brought to them to the whole world. He then promised *"I am with you always, even unto the end of time"*. Matthew 28: 20



The significance of this promise failed to register with them until the first Pentecost, the day the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then,

suddenly, they had the courage to speak out, strength to begin building a Christian community and an amazing power to convince others of the truth of what they said about Jesus Christ.

It is this strength, courage and power that is the Spirit of Christ. Jesus was true to his word, he hadn't left them because his Spirit came into their hearts permanently. This same Holy Spirit enters our lives in this active way at our confirmation.

From the earliest of days of the Church the gift of the Holy Spirit has been linked to Baptism. In the Acts of the Apostles we read how Philip, the Deacon, made converts in Samaria and baptised them. The apostles then sent Peter and John to the converts. *"They prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit for as yet he had not come upon any of them because they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."* Acts 8: 14-17

Later when Paul came to Ephesus, he found *"disciples.. who have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit"*. They had received only John's baptism. When they heard of Christ, *'they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them.'* Acts 19: 1-6

In each case baptism was followed by the laying on of hands. Just as Jesus invited his followers to join him, it was only after they had received the Holy Spirit that they were able to go out and pass on the Good News about the kind of life Jesus had revealed to them. So it is with us; we receive God's invitation and accept it at Baptism.

This is followed by the laying on of hands at Confirmation that inspires us to live the Gospel. Confirmation celebrates the presence of the Holy Spirit within us and strengthens us to witness for Christ.

So Confirmation is a continuing of what has begun at Baptism; a continuance of the developing awareness and reality of faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. At our baptism, faith was conceived; we became part of Christ's body; part of his Church. The Holy Spirit ensures that we are a sister or brother of Christ. Our confirmation is the gentle unfolding of what our baptism means.

At Confirmation we celebrate the fact that we are being transformed and that that transformation will continue to take place from the day we are confirmed until we are completely one with God. We are on a journey to wholeness, peace, and for perfecting in love. Our heavenly Father celebrates with us because we are responding to his invitation to a life of love and reconciliation. We have said 'Yes' to his invitation to be part of the visible, living, breathing, Spirit-filled body of Christ, the Church. It is only through the action and lives of Christians that the Holy Spirit, through faith and the sacraments, can show what the Church is truly called to be; the living body of Christ. And this must be at the heart of any other activity we undertake.

What began when we were baptised is celebrated, strengthened and completed in confirmation (the word 'confirm' means to make firm, strengthen or complete).