

What Next? Life After Confirmation

Young people are often seen as perpetual table setters, leaf-rakers, child caregivers, clean-up crews, and car washers. Many are not passionate about such tasks. Like adults, young people are gifted in many areas and need to be invited to share their talents. Congregations need to embrace and fully include the newly confirmed young adult just as any other adult member; being able to serve at the altar, on a Vestry or Search Committee, or any other parish committee. They can be part of the Soup Kitchen team or Pastoral Care Team that makes visitations to the ill and home bound. They can edit the parish newsletter, maintain the church's website, or be part of the social media team. Their voices should be encouraged to be heard as part of any planning decision and be given responsibility (with adult mentorship and support if necessary) to live out those tasks.

Their ministry in the world should be encouraged and supported, whether it is their academic, paid, or volunteer work in the community. Recognition of their individual gifts and providing opportunities for them to share in ministry can help incorporate them in the post-confirmation period, assuming the role of adulthood. Their mentor can assist in keeping them connected, maintaining a supportive relationship that was begun during the preparation period.

Young people need to be invited, included, and welcomed to share their gifts. They need to know that what they say and do matters. They will recognize condescension and tolerance; they will walk the other way, knowing when they are set apart for their age and not for who they are. It is also important to offer learning opportunities for youth once they have been confirmed, and for all adults! Faith formation is lifelong and does not stop once one is confirmed.

Questions to consider in planning on-going education for high school students might include:

- What biblical content, issues, and themes would be appropriate to continue to explore, being mindful of world events and planning for the future (educationally, socially, vocationally)?
- How is service and mission, prayer and worship, being in community, learning, and proclamation opportunities offered in addition to that which is offered for children?
- What theological issues about faith and life were raised during the confirmation preparation period that can become content for future discussion and exploration?
- Are there opportunities for them to continue to explore their gifts and ministries in the congregation, diocese, or among other churches and groups? Are opportunities to live out peace and justice in the world available? Liturgically? Through mission?

Regular dedication to discipleship, service, and mission is expressed every time we celebrate Holy Baptism. Mature members of the faith community should be engaged in learning contexts with younger members. Congregations need to be catechumenal communities, focused on the ministry of all the baptized, accepting the gifts of all ages.

Adapted from the 2006 Confirmation Guidelines adopted by the Diocese of Connecticut (during the tenure of The Rt. Rev. Andrew Smith, Diocesan). Copyright ©2020 *The Confirmation Collaborative* c/o sharonepearson@gmail.com