

Confirmation at Age 9

A Key Opportunity to Set Hearts Afire for Christ



INSTITUTE FOR EVANGELIZATION
*Office of Family, Youth
& Young Adult Ministry*
ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Many thanks to Fr. Paul Turner for sharing his expertise in this subject matter.

In the Early Church:
Sacramental anointing
occurs in tandem with
Baptism & First Eucharist

Adult initiation is typical, as is
initiation of entire families at once.



1200s-1800s: Both age & sequence are fluid.

- Infant Baptism remains typical.
- First Eucharist is celebrated around age 10-14.
- Confirmation is celebrated no earlier than age 7.
- Confirmation becomes an occasion for catechesis.
- The tradition of Confirmation names appears during this period.



1960s-1980s: The Second
Vatican Council calls for reviving
the practice of the Early Church.

- This leads to the development of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, or RCIA (now called OCIA, the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults)



400s-1200s AD:
In the West, a
separation develops:

- Baptism and First Eucharist are celebrated in infancy, while Confirmation is now celebrated in childhood.
- The Bishop is now understood as the ordinary celebrant for Confirmation.

1910:

Pope Pius X's decree *Quam singulari* sets the universal age of
First Eucharist at age 7.

- No mention is made of Confirmation, which remains at a later age in many locations per local tradition.

1976: The AOB sets the age of
adolescent Confirmation at grades 8-10.

- This age is reaffirmed in subsequent AOB documents on Confirmation (1983 and 2000).

Canon 891: "The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops has determined another age..."
The USCCB failed to come to a consensus on a nationwide age and instead permits a range ("age of discretion to about sixteen years") as determined by the local ordinary.

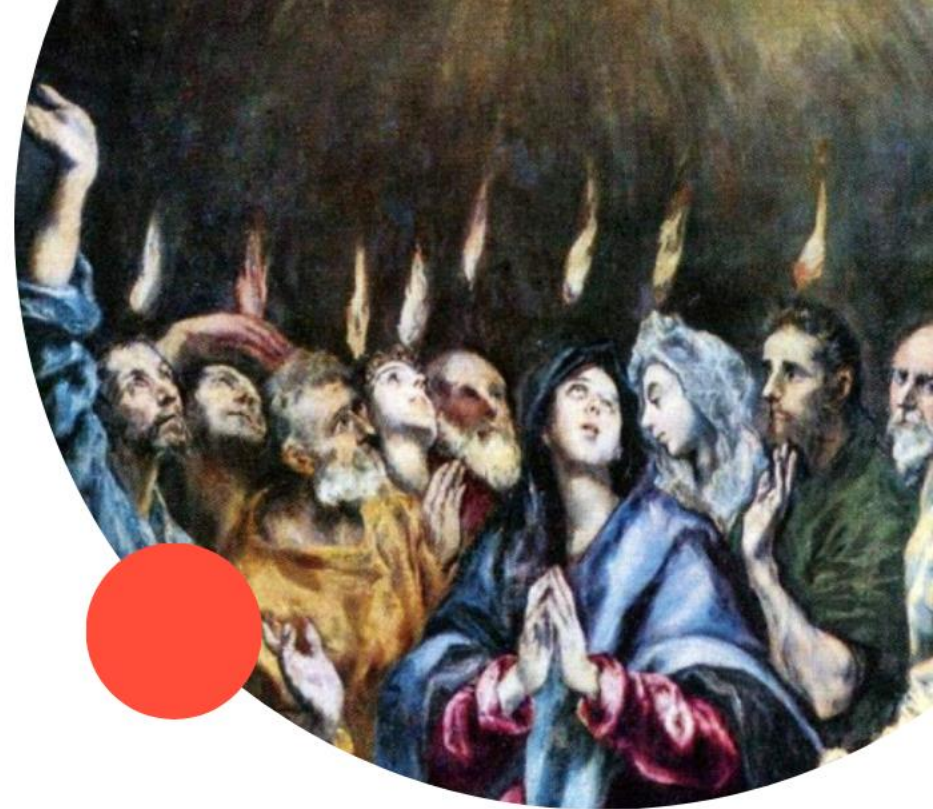
Confirmation is about **WITNESS**,

Not Maturity.

“It is evident from its celebration that *the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.*”

From this fact, Confirmation brings an **increase and deepening of baptismal grace:**

- it **roots us more deeply** in the divine filiation which makes us cry, ‘Abba! Father!’;
- it **unites us more firmly** to Christ;
- it **increases** the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church **more perfect**;
- it gives us a **special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ**, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross...”

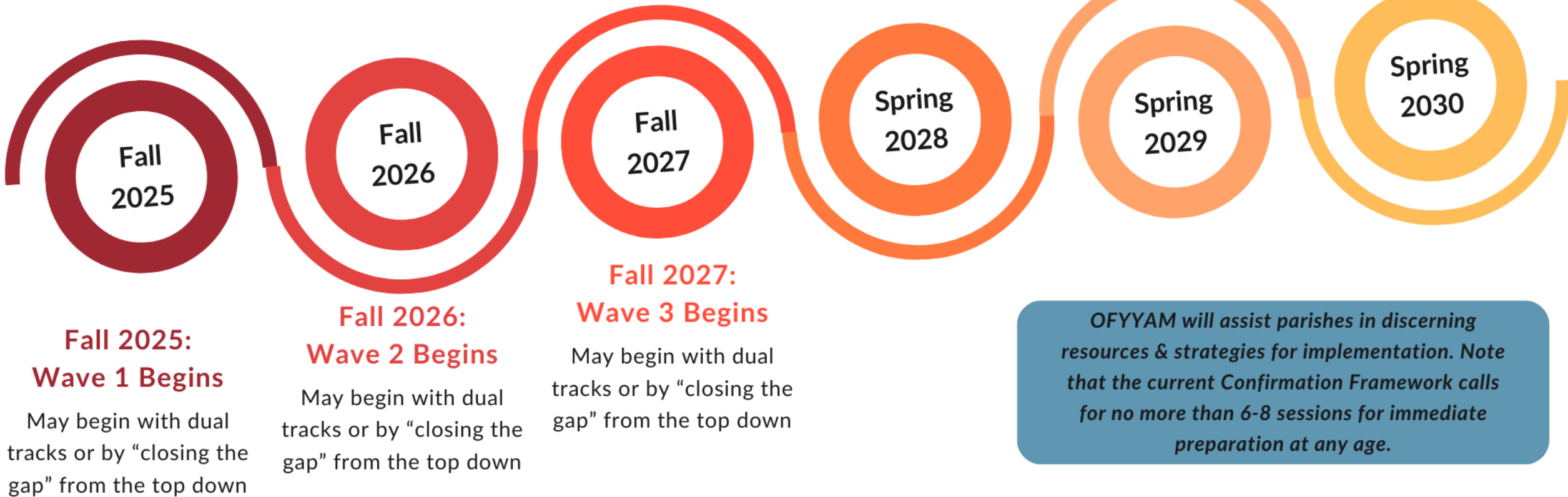


CONFIRMATION AT AGE 9

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

3 Waves

Each Wave of parishes has 3 years from the start of their wave to complete implementation.



How will we keep them engaged?



Robust Family Faith Formation

Intentional structures that support the entire family (especially parents) in lifelong experience of **community**, **catechesis**, **transformative prayer & liturgy**, and **meaningful service**.



Effective Youth Ministry

Relational and authentic accompaniment rooted in the principles of **mystagogy** (unpacking the sacraments of initiation) and **vocation** (God's call to holiness expressed in each unique human person).



Dependable Support for Young Adults

Investment in our own local **college campus ministries**, partnerships with collegiate and military chaplaincies worldwide, and the hard work of developing **truly young-adult-friendly parishes** and communities in collaboration with our parish & Catholic Center colleagues.



Sacramental Prep: No "One-Size-Fits-All"

Processes of Adult Confirmation, Baptismal Prep, First Eucharist Prep, OCIA, OCIA Adapted for Children/Teens, and the like must also be designed **serve to the person rather than the program**.



Re-envisioned Marriage Formation

Realignment of the culture and practices of marriage preparation and enrichment using the **catechumenate model**, beginning in childhood and extending through all the years of married life.



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