

Congratulations on wanting to explore confirmation with the Church of England. Confirmation can be an important part of a lifetime journey of faith as a follower of Jesus Christ. The first step will be to talk to your local vicar.

When you speak to your vicar, they will usually invite you to a few meetings to help you get ready for the service. This is a good way to explore your faith with others who are also thinking about confirmation and is a safe place to ask any questions you have about God, Jesus and the journey of faith.

These are some common questions about confirmation, and the local vicar will be delighted to explain all that's involved too.

To find your local church, visit www.AChurchNearYou.com

What is confirmation?

Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptized. If you were baptized at a christening when you were a child, your parents and godparents made these promises on your behalf. As a young person or adult, you may be ready to affirm these promises for yourself and commit your life to following Jesus Christ. At a confirmation service, you make these promises for yourself. Your friends and family as well as the local Christian community will be there to promise to support and pray for you.

The local bishop will lay their hands on your head and ask God's Holy Spirit to give you the strength and commitment to live God's way for the rest of your life.

What happens during the service?

Confirmation usually takes place in a special service in your own church, at the cathedral or in another parish church, although it may take place during the main Sunday service at your own church. There will be hymns, readings and sometimes those being confirmed talk about their faith. After the Bishop has laid hands on each person's head there will be special prayers – then there will be often some celebratory refreshments to follow!

There may be a rehearsal before the confirmation service so that you understand everything that happens in the service

Will I need godparents?

At a christening, godparents stand alongside the parents to make promises on behalf of the child being baptized. At confirmation, there are no godparents because you make the promises for yourself, but you may be asked if you would like a sponsor to stand with you as a supporting friend in your journey of faith. Usually this is someone who has previously been confirmed. It may be one of the people who has prepared you for confirmation, or it may be a youth worker, a good friend, a relative, or a godparent.

Will I take Holy Communion when confirmed?

Sometimes a service of Holy Communion will follow a confirmation, either on the same day or on the next Sunday. For some people this will be the first time they share in bread and wine. Some may have received Holy Communion before; it depends on the approach of their usual church.

What is the right age for confirmation?

There is no right age for a person to be confirmed. Anyone may be confirmed who has been baptized and if they are old enough to answer responsibly for themselves. In some areas of the country, the local bishop sets a minimum age for confirmation. If this is the case, your vicar will be able to tell you what the minimum age is. As a general rule, anyone who is over 10 years old and can answer for themselves could be ready for confirmation, but the right time for you might be at any age – you could be in your teens or in your nineties!

How can I tell if I am ready for confirmation?

If you feel strongly for yourself that confirmation is right for you at this point in your life, it's likely that it is. Pray about this and ask others in your church to pray for you. Talk to your vicar too, and even if you are unsure about being confirmed, you may wish to participate in the confirmation course to help you think about it.

Can I receive communion without being confirmed?

Anyone getting ready for confirmation can receive communion as part of being prepared. In some areas of the country, children may be admitted to Holy Communion before confirmation. This means that some young people will come to confirmation having shared in Holy Communion, while others will receive communion after confirmation.

I was baptized as a child, why do I need to be confirmed?

Confirmation is an important choice. In confirmation, you make the promises your parents made on your behalf at your baptism for yourself, making public your commitment to a journey of faith. It's a great moment to acknowledge your place in the local and worldwide church. In turn the church will promise to support and pray for you.

I'm not a regular churchgoer. Can I still be confirmed?

Confirmation is about being a part of the local and worldwide Christian family. If you would like to make this commitment, visit your local church and discuss this with the vicar. Details of your local church may be found at www.achurchnearyou.com

What happens after confirmation?

After confirmation you continue to go along to church, joining in with worship and prayer and sharing in Holy Communion. If you were part of a group with others getting ready for confirmation, your group may wish to stay in touch afterwards to support each other.

If you were prepared as an individual, ask your vicar, or whoever prepared you, about house groups at your church, or you may wish to explore one-to-one spiritual direction.

What if I wasn't baptized as a child?

You will need to be baptized before you are confirmed. If you were not baptized as a child and want to make a commitment of faith, you can be baptized and confirmed in the same service, or baptized at a separate service shortly before your confirmation. You should discuss this with your vicar.

What does it cost?

A confirmation service is free, though there may be a small charge for a certificate. Ask your vicar for details.

What happens during a confirmation course or group

The way that churches help people get ready for confirmation may vary, but all will encourage people to grow in their Christian faith through prayer, reflection, studying the Bible, going to church and living out their faith in their communities.

Do I have to wait for a group of people to be confirmed?

Not necessarily. An individual church or group of churches will sometimes have a large group of people wishing to be confirmed and sometimes a much smaller group of even one or two. Confirmation can go ahead whatever the situation and the vicar will organise this.

Can I be baptized or confirmed again?

You can only be baptized or confirmed once in the Church of England, but there are ways of renewing your Christian commitment again – the vicar of your church will be able to tell you more about this.

What if I was baptized or confirmed in another denomination?

Talk to the vicar of your local church so they can find out if being confirmed in the Church of England is necessary for you. If not, there is a simple service which can be offered to receive and welcome you into the Church of England, if that is something you would like. Either the local bishop or the vicar would take the service.

Do I need to be confirmed to be a member of the Church of England?

Being confirmed is a choice not a requirement – the Church of England doesn't have a formal membership in that sense - anyone is welcome to come along to church, worship and be a part of the church community. Being confirmed is simply a sign of your commitment and involvement. Some leadership roles and being ordained as a minister do require confirmation.

Do I need to be confirmed to work for the Church of England?

Those who wish to exercise certain leadership roles in the Church of England, including ordained ministers, Readers and licensed lay workers, need to be confirmed as a sign of their commitment to living as disciples of Christ as the Church of England understands it.

What is the Affirmation of Baptismal Faith?

This service is intended for people who have been baptized and confirmed and who want a formal way of marking either that they have returned to the practice of the Christian faith, or that their faith has become meaningful to them in a new way. Ask the vicar at your usual church for more information about what it involves.

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