

Diocesan Manual

Guidelines for Episcopal Visitations¹

General

- 1) The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated
- 2) The Bishop will be the Celebrant and will take all parts of the liturgy for which the rubric specifies "Celebrant." If present for two Eucharists on the same Sunday, the Bishop will preach, absolve, and bless at both services, but may ask the Rector/Vicar to celebrate at the early service.
- 3) All other parts of the liturgy will be assigned to deacons, lay readers, or priests, as appropriate. The Bishop's Chaplain normally accompanies the Bishop and is available to function in the liturgy as a deacon if no other deacon is present. It is appropriate to plan for the Bishop's Chaplain to administer the chalice during communion.
- 4) The Bishop will normally preach, but might on occasion invite one of the clergy to do so, with adequate notice.
- 5) If the Celebrant will be expected to sing the Preface or other parts of the liturgy, please make arrangements for a cantor to take these parts.
- 6) Scriptures for a Sunday Visitation will normally be the Propers for that Sunday. On a major Holy Day they will be those for that day. On a ferial day, Propers for Baptism or Confirmation may be used. For the congregation's Patronymic Festival, the Propers for its patron or title may be transferred to a Sunday, except in seasons of Advent, Lent or Easter (BCP, p.16). If any other than the Propers of the Sunday are to be used, notify the Bishop in advance so his sermon may agree with the text read.
- 7) If the bulletin is done in time to do so, send a copy to the Bishop. Any special requests may be made in advance.
- 8) A check for the undesignated (better than "loose") offering should be sent to "The Diocesan Discretionary Fund."
- 9) A meeting of the Bishop with the Vestry and other lay leaders is desirable. If this is possible, please schedule the meeting with the bishop.
- 10) The Bishop's Chaplain would like to meet with the Sr. High School class (if possible) to discuss planning for possible vocations to ordained ministry.
- 11) Photographs, especially those with flash, are not appropriate in a service of the worship of God. The Bishop will pose with the class or individuals before or after the service, but not during it, please.

Baptisms

- 1) The Bishop's Visitation is one of the appropriate times to celebrate Holy Baptism (BCP, p. 312).
- 2) The Bishop will then be the Celebrant.
- 3) It is the Bishop's custom always to offer the Rector/Vicar the privilege of doing the actual baptisms (BCP, p. 307) if the priest so wishes.
- 4) The Bishop will normally apply Chrism to each person baptized as the symbol of the seal of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. Chrismation is appropriate in Baptism, not in Confirmation. It is expected that the parents and sponsors of infants and older candidates themselves will be thoroughly instructed in the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism.
- 5) If baptisms are to be conducted, the Bishop would appreciate an opportunity to meet with the older candidates and the parents and sponsors of infants on the morning of the baptism.

¹ This is usually the Bishop's annual visit to a Congregation.

- 6) Parish Record Books: The Bishop is required to inspect the records of the Church. Please have current registers open and available for the Bishop to inspect and sign.

Confirmations

- 1) Normally The Sacrament of Holy Confirmation will be celebrated during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. The confirmation services will be held as deanery wide events scheduled by the Deans of the Deaneries.
- 2) Please refer to the Diocesan Confirmation Customary produced by the Bishop's commission on Liturgy and Music for details of the service.
- 3) Please notify the Bishop's Office in advance of how many confirmations and receptions you expect to have at the Deanery Service. The Bishop's Office will send signed certificates to be filled in and presented on the day of the Confirmation.
- 4) A comfortable chair with arm rests, either the Bishop's chair or another one, should be positioned at the Chancel step, or wherever most visible to the congregation, for Confirmations.
- 5) Name tags on Candidates should clearly state: CONFIRM, or RECEIVE Only the given name or name called need be printed in large letters easily readable.
- 6) Provision should be made for each person to kneel to receive the Laying on of Hands, but the Bishop will be happy to stand to Confirm, or Receive, anyone who is unable to kneel.
- 7) Bishop Lipscomb prefers to have each candidate for Confirmation kneel singly. Candidates for Reception should stand. Please discuss this with the Bishop if you wish to do it differently.
- 8) The color of altar hangings and vestments for Confirmation will normally be white since the celebration occurs during the Great Fifty Day of Easter.
- 9) If you have any questions not answered above, write a letter as well as calling. Your letters will be kept in a file so those answers may be given in future instructions.

Customary for Confirmation

Theology

In the course of their Christian development (formation), those baptized at an early age are expected when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.

Those baptized as adults, unless baptized with laying on of hands by a bishop, are also expected to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism in the presence of a bishop and to receive the laying on of hands.

Those who have been baptized and made a mature public affirmation of faith in another denomination of the church may be received into the Episcopal Church.

The Service

1. The rubrics of *The Book of Common Prayer* are to be observed.
2. The character of the celebration should be a multi-congregational and inclusive worship experience.
3. The ministers of the liturgy should be from various congregations.
4. A Deanery Liturgy Committee could be established to plan the service in consultation with the dean.
5. The liturgy should have leadership from a variety of congregations.
6. This service is for confirmation and reception only. Services of Reaffirmation take place in the parish and are led by the rector or priest-in-charge.

NOTES CONCERNING THE SERVICE

1. If the service is on a Sunday, The Rite of Confirmation is used. Please note that the Eucharist is not used.
2. If it is on a weekday, The Rite of Confirmation may be used alone or with The Holy Eucharist, Rite 2.

The Collect for Confirmation, Prayer Book page 254 will be used. The suggested readings are:

Year A: Isaiah 61:1-9; Matthew 5:1-12; Psalm 1

Year B: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 4: 16-22; Psalm 139:1-9

Year C: Ezekiel 37:1-10; John 14: 15-21; Psalm 1 3.

3. At the presentation and examination of the candidates, when the bishop says "The candidates will now be presented," each congregation will present its candidates for Confirmation and Reception. They may simply stand as a group wherever they are seated in the church.

After all candidates have been presented, together they will stand and respond to the bishop's questions.

4. Please print clearly the name of each candidate on a name tag, underlining the name the Bishop is to use, and at the bottom, indicate **C** for Confirmation or **R** for Reception. If the name has an unusual pronunciation, please have someone there at the time of laying-on-of-hands to tell the Bishop. For example:

John
Jones
C

Remind all candidates that the name tags are for the Bishop to read, so check to be sure that clothing or hair do not obstruct them.

5. The service may conclude with:

The Lord's Prayer

A Litany of Thanksgiving, (*Prayer Book, page 837*)

Collect for the Diocese, (*Prayer Book, page 817*)

Collect for the Mission of the Church, (*Prayer Book page 816*)

If the service is in the evening, it may conclude with collects from Daily Evening Prayer.

6. Bishop Lipscomb has asked that the offering be designated for a local deanery ministry.
7. One of the following blessings may be used:

May the God of all grace who has called us to his everlasting glory in Christ Jesus, after brief suffering, restore us to himself and confirm us. May he strengthen us and make us steadfast. To him be power forever and ever! Amen. (1 Peter 5: 10-11)

May the Lord help us to grow and abound in love for one another. May he confirm our hearts in holiness without blame before God our Father, at the time of his coming with all his saints. Amen. (1 Thessalonians 3: 12-13)

A Service Outline

As the people gather there may be instrumental or choral music. Some deaneries have sung hymns from *The Hymnal; Wonder, Love and Praise*; and/or *Lift Every Voice and Sing* that have baptismal or commitment themes. This helps bring people together. However, during the time that the Bishop is laying-on hands there should be no music or anything that would interfere with the congregation hearing the Bishop.

Logistically, it saves on undue confusion if the candidates are in their seats at the beginning of the service, rather than in the procession.

If the planners do have the candidates in the procession at the beginning, please do not have them be in procession at the end of the service. Our experience is that this extends the service unnecessarily. Only the altar party should process out.

1. The Rite of Confirmation, concluding with the Peace.
2. Ingathering of the General Offering. Hymns, anthems, or instrumental music may accompany this.
3. Concluding Prayers:

The Lord's Prayer

A Litany of Thanksgiving, BCP p. 837

Collect for the Diocese, BCP p. 817

Collect for the Mission of the Church, BCP p. 816

4. An Episcopal Blessing
5. A Hymn