

APPENDIX A
(Pastoral Letter 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2016)

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS
FIRST SACRAMENTS AND THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

In his pastoral letter (25 September 2016) to the faithful in the Diocese of Leeds, Bishop Marcus set out his vision for the formation of the Catholic children and young people within the diocese. *'In the primary years of education, we should try to help our children learn to know the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to listen to Him in prayer and to develop a personal loving relationship with Him. In the secondary years of education and in higher education at sixth form and through Leeds Trinity University we should try to deepen the faith and relationship of our young people with Our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

The age at which the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred will change from the age of 14 to the age of 11; that is from Year 9 in school to Year 6, the last year of primary education. This change cannot be introduced immediately. There needs to be a period when children aged between 11 and 14 also prepare and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and this needs to be done in such a way that those who support them can manage the increased numbers receiving preparation. The valuable contribution of parish catechists, clergy and school staff in supporting the faith journey of our young people is recognised and it is hoped that this will continue and the new framework will encourage more parishioners to be willing to support this important role in formation. The purpose of this guidance is to set out how we will achieve this vision.

Key Stage 1 Age

Reception	4-5	Introduction to prayer and life as children of God
Year 1	5-6	Catechesis on the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and on prayer
Year 2	6-7	Catechesis on the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ and on prayer

Key Stage 2 Age

Year 3	7-8	Catechesis and Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (The enrolment in the parish/school sacramental programme should take place at the beginning of autumn term for Key Stage 2). Catechesis and Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (celebrated in Lent during spring term)
Year 4	8-9	Catechesis and Preparation for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion (celebrated in summer term)
Year 5	9-10	Catechesis and Preparation for Sacrament of Confirmation
Year 6	10-11	Catechesis and Preparation for Sacrament of Confirmation (celebrated in autumn and summer terms)

This timetable will apply to pupils who will begin their formation for the sacraments of initiation in the academic year 2017/18 beginning with the Sacrament of Reconciliation i.e. those children who are now entering year 2 in 2016/17.

Transition Period

Academic Year 2016/17

1. Children in year 3 will prepare and receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion in Year 3 as usual.
2. Young people in year 9 will prepare for confirmation in order to receive the sacrament in the summer of 2017 as now.
3. Young people in year 8 will also prepare for confirmation alongside year 9 – **this is a change.**

Academic Year 2017/18

1. The new preparation format for First Sacraments will be introduced. Pupils in year 3 (current year 2) will prepare for and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The focus for the remainder of the year will be on the importance of continuing to receive this sacrament.
2. Year 5 will begin preparation for confirmation to be received in the following autumn (2018) using a new programme.
3. Year 6 will begin preparation alongside year 5 using a new programme with confirmation to be received in the following autumn (2018).
4. Years 7 and 8 will begin preparation for confirmation to be received in summer 2018 using the existing programmes.

Academic Year 2018/19

1. The new preparation timetable is in place for year 3 onwards.
2. Year 4 children (who received reconciliation the previous year) will make their First Holy Communion in the summer term.
3. Year 5 children will prepare for confirmation to be received in autumn 2019.
4. Year 6 children will complete preparation and be confirmed autumn 2018.
5. Year 7 children (having prepared the year before during year 6) will be confirmed autumn 2018.

Practical Aspects

In order to support these changes the following aspects will also be addressed during the next year.

1. Further support will be given to existing and new catechists who are delivering the existing programme for Confirmation to young people of high school age. There may be a need for further training sessions and recruitment to assist with the two year groups undertaking preparation in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
2. Linda Pennington, Co-ordinator for Catechesis, Vicariate for Education is currently considering catechetical programmes for confirmation that are appropriate for younger age groups. Once this is decided then training and support including resources will be rolled out across deaneries and training will be offered to catechists supporting Confirmation of 11 year olds. It is hoped that the preparation will be

supported by the schools alongside the parish. Parishes need to consider the recruitment of catechists to facilitate the delivery of the new programme.

3. Regular newsletters will be provided to catechists to share good practice and assist them in their valuable role. Information for catechists and families will be included on the diocesan website.
4. For 2018/19, high schools need to liaise with their parishes to identify the students making their confirmation in the autumn term as it is hoped that they will then be introduced to the Youth Service work and the opportunities for further involvement.
5. Christopher Devanny, Diocesan RE Co-ordinator for Schools will plan the sacramental modules that form part of The Way, The Truth and The Life, RE curriculum programme to ensure they are included at the appropriate time in the calendar for the relevant year groups. This allows the children to study those sacraments in school at the same time as taking part in their own catechetical preparation in the parish.
6. The venue and date for confirmation services in each deanery will need to be considered in the light of the increased numbers of candidates. This will be discussed with the Bishop's Office and the Deans.

With the Sacrament of Confirmation moving to primary education, the Youth Service team (working with the recently appointed Director of Youth Service, Fr Marc Homsey) has been tasked with developing a programme to engage our students as they move through high school and beyond, so that in knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ they accept the graces flowing from him and use them to make a real impact for good in the society in which they live. Our young people should be at the heart of the Church's mission in both our schools and our parishes.

We are immensely grateful to catechists and school staff who give so generously of their time and expertise to support our children and young people in their faith journey. These changes will require the goodwill and co-operation of all those working with our young people, especially in the transitional years between primary and secondary schooling. We hope that existing catechists will continue to help us as we develop the Bishop's vision for our young people. We will very much welcome new catechists to become involved with delivering these changes. The Vicariate will help you with training and we look forward to meeting you on these occasions.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Fr Tim Swinglehurst, Episcopal Vicar for Education, timothy.swinglehurst@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or Linda Pennington, Co-ordinator for Catechesis, linda.pennington@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Implementation Timetable

Table 1

Current 2016/17 Year Group	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Reception	R	Y1	Y2	Reconciliation	Y3	Preparation
Y1	Y1	Y2	Reconciliation	Y3	Communion	Y4
Y2	Y2	Reconciliation	Y3	Communion	Y4	Preparation
Y3	Reconciliation & Communion	Y3	Y4	Preparation	Y5	Confirmation
Y4	Y4	Preparation	Y5	Confirmation	Y6	Y7
Y5	Y5	Preparation	Y6	Confirmation	Y7	Y8
Y6	Y6	Confirmation	Y7		Y8	Y9
Y7	Y7	Confirmation	Y8			
Y8	Confirmation	Y8				
Y9	Confirmation	Y9				
Current Confirmation Programme	Current First Sacraments Programme	Current First Sacraments Programme	2017/18 onwards pilot Youth Services programme in high school/parish	2019/20 onwards offer Youth Services programme in high school/parish		
New 2 year Confirmation Programme	New 2 year First Sacraments Programme					